Historic Soil Conservation at Malabar Farm, 1939-1972

THESIS

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By

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Abstract

The soil conservation movement of the 1940s and ‘50s was one of the most important historical events in the 20th century, yet is often overlooked in discussions about future sustainability. A wealth of information was written about soil conservation during this time which is not readily available to the general public today. The goal of this research was to compile some of this underutilized information about historic soil conservation, focused specifically on Malabar Farm in northeast Ohio, and to emphasize the importance of this history in current sustainability discussions. Archival research was conducted primarily in the Louis Bromfield Collection at the OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, with additional archival research at the Ohio History Center and a site visit to Malabar Farm State Park. Pulitzer prize-winning author Louis Bromfield established Malabar Farm in 1939, experimented with new soil conservation methods, and demonstrated how these innovative techniques could make worn-out land productive once more. By giving tours of Malabar Farm and writing several books about it, Bromfield used his literary fame and fortune to inform the general public about conservation agriculture in a way that could not be done by university experiment stations. After Bromfield died in 1956, the farm was managed by non-profit organizations until it became an Ohio State Park in 1972, which it remains to this day. This historic soil conservation movement had such a profound effect on modern agriculture that today its results are often taken for granted. Many farmers do not understand the importance of soil conservation and are beginning to revert to the unsustainable practices that caused catastrophic soil degradation in the past. It is critical to remember the lesson learned at Malabar Farm: to give soil health top priority in farming in order to maintain productivity and prevent collapse of the agricultural system.

Acknowledgements

A research project of this magnitude could not be accomplished alone, and I am very grateful to the numerous individuals who helped make this research a reality.

I would like to thank everyone in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Room at OSU for being so helpful and teaching me how to do research with archived materials. This includes Dr. Geoffrey Smith, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, who was the first one to tell me about the Louis Bromfield Collection and helped me get started; Rebecca Jewett, Assistant Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, who helped me find materials and gave me information on copyright rules and citations; and the students working in the Rare Book Room who were always very helpful and efficient in finding materials, checking them out to me, and guiding me through the paperwork involved in examining the manuscripts. I would also like to thank the staff at the Ohio History Center for helping me find information on Friends of the Land.

This research really came alive to me when I had the opportunity to actually visit Malabar Farm State Park. I would like to thank Tom Bachelder, "retired" park guide and historian, for spending an entire day with me, giving me a behind-the-scenes tour of the Big House, answering all my questions about obscure historical facts, and commenting on my manuscript. I am also very grateful to Korre Boyer, the manager of Malabar Farm State Park, for taking over half a day out of his busy schedule to give us a private Gator tour of the park and for opening up all the buildings that were locked for me.

The generous support of many scholarship donors enabled me to attend OSU and conduct this research. I would like to thank the Roy M. Kottman Scholars Program, the Wilhelm and Eleanor Beckert scholarship Fund, the Thomas B. Kyle Scholarship Fund, the Roy O. Becker Crop Science Scholarship Fund, and the other donors whose contributions made my education and this project possible.

I am very grateful to my advisor, Dr. James Metzger, for giving me the flexibility to do a project that is a little atypical for the Horticulture and Crop Science Department, and for agreeing to be my undergraduate research advisor in addition to my academic advisor. I am also grateful to Dr. Pat Whittington, the CFAES Honors Program Coordinator, for being flexible with the research requirements and approving this project, and for Dr. Peg McMahon for her comments on the manuscript.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother, Caroline Abbott, for accompanying me on my trip to Malabar Farm and also for encouraging me that it was all right to be different and do what I really wanted to do for my undergraduate research project.

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Introduction

Soil. To many, it is just dirt: ubiquitous, commonplace, messy, and insignificant. Yet soil is one of our most important natural resources—arguably the most important of all. This is because soil is essential for plant growth, and from plants come the myriad of food products that nourish both animals and humans. Soil is more than just dirt, more than just a sterile mixture of sand, silt, and clay. It is full of life—of bacteria, fungi, earthworms, and other innumerable species from every taxonomic kingdom. It is the organisms in soil that recycle nutrients from dead plants and animals and make them available to plants. Soil sequesters carbon in the form of organic matter. Soil is an essential part of any agricultural system; it would be impossible to sustain the world merely on hydroponics. Food comes from the soil, and behind every strong civilization is a healthy soil.

Although its importance was realized, for many years soil was regarded as indestructible. As late as 1909, the United States Department of Agriculture boldly stated that, "The soil is the one indestructible, immutable asset that the Nation possesses. It is the one resource that cannot be exhausted; that cannot be used up" (Brink, 1951, p. 7). Unfortunately, Americans soon found out that the soil was not inexhaustible. By the 1930s it became all too evident that American farmers had not been good stewards of their most valuable natural resource, and that it was eroding at catastrophic rates. Massive dust storms that originated in the Great Plains and deposited material as far east as Washington, D.C. and out into the Atlantic Ocean finally woke up legislators to the reality that soil could, in fact, be used up. In front of a background of dust blowing from Kansas and Oklahoma that darkened the sky at midday, Hugh Hammond Bennett finally persuaded Congress to establish the US Soil Conservation Service in 1935—and the soil conservation movement began (Brink, 1951, pp. 6-7).

The soil conservation movement increased rapidly, with the establishment of experimental research stations across the country to learn more about erosion and to test practices that could prevent it. Conservation organizations sprang up, including Friends of the Land, which was formed in 1940 "For the Conservation of Soil, Rain, and Man" (Friends, 1941, p. 11). Farmers began to implement conservation practices across the nation and were rewarded with increasingly productive land and higher yields. The implementation of soil conservation practices concurred with other advances in agriculture, such as improved crop varieties and increased use of chemical fertilizers. Often the improved varieties and fertilizers are given all the credit for rising crop yields in the latter half of the 20th century, but it can be convincingly argued that without soil conservation these increases could not have been possible.

It was during this period of rapid progress in soil conservation that a man named Louis Bromfield established a farm near Mansfield, Ohio, which he christened "Malabar Farm" (Figure 1). Bromfield soon became a passionate advocate of soil conservation, writing a total of four books about the topic and hosting weekly tours of Malabar Farm. By 1950, Malabar Farm was known as "The most famous farm in the world" due to the huge number of visitors that it attracted. Malabar is unique among many soil conservation efforts of this time period in that it

has survived intact to the present day; it is now an Ohio State Park. The purpose of this research project was to summarize the history of Malabar Farm in a sequential, orderly manner, and to use that history to guide future research on soil conservation and sustainability.

There is a wealth of information available about the 20th century soil conservation movement, as soil conservationists were prolific writers and produced thousands of volumes of literature on the topic. Some of this information was collected in the ecological library at Malabar Farm, which already contained 1,000 books and subscriptions to 180 periodicals by 1958 (Besch, 1958). Most of this information has survived to the present day in library collections, but to read even a tenth of the material published on the topic of soil conservation would be a daunting, if not impossible, task. Therefore, this project focuses specifically on the history of soil conservation at Malabar Farm, from the time it was established by Louis Bromfield in 1939 to when it became an Ohio State Park in 1972 (Figure 2). Some information on Friends of the Land is also included in this report, although the coverage of that organization is by no means exhaustive. Although this represents, by necessity, only a fraction of the available historic literature, the views and practices advocated both by Louis Bromfield and Friends of the Land, as well as the issues they faced, are representative of this period and can help give insight into this critical time in soil conservation history.

The information gained from this research is presented in this paper and can be broadly divided into three parts. The first chapter describes the methods used to collect information. The following 14 chapters present the history of Malabar Farm from 1939-1972 in detail, including some information which has not previously been published. Some background information is provided on Louis Bromfield and on Friends of the Land, with emphasis on the formation and dissolution of the organization. A chapter on soil erosion and other historic environmental degradation, derived mainly from Friends of the Land materials, is also presented to provide some background for why the formation of this organization was necessary. This section concludes with a short description of Malabar Farm State Park today. The final four chapters apply this historical information to current soil conservation and sustainability issues and emphasize lessons from Malabar's history that can be applied to the present. Suggestions are also given for further research and why this information should be made more accessible to the general public.

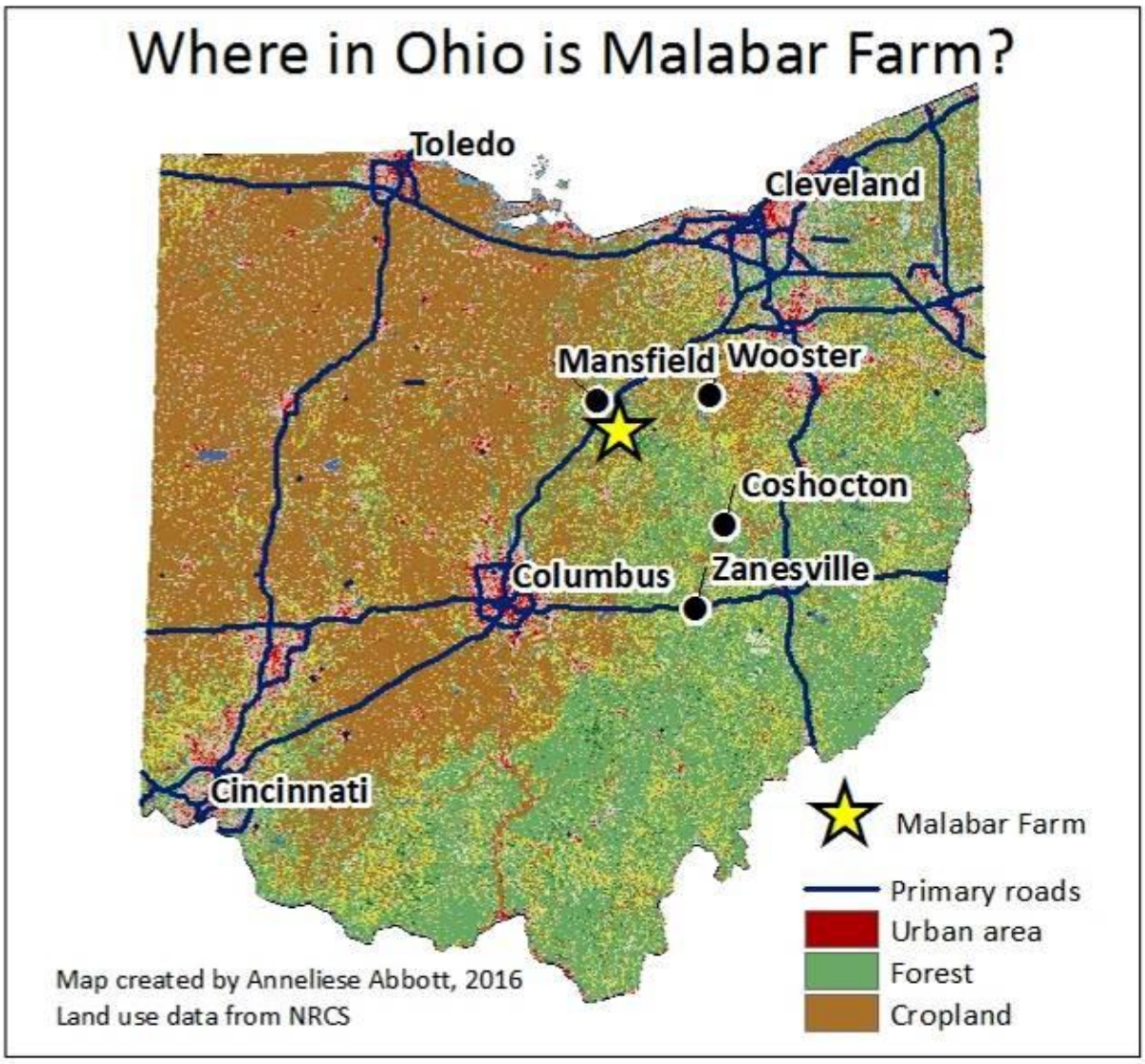


Figure 1: Map of Ohio showing the location of Malabar Farm, with background of current land use data. Malabar is on the border between the glaciated and unglaciated regions of Ohio.

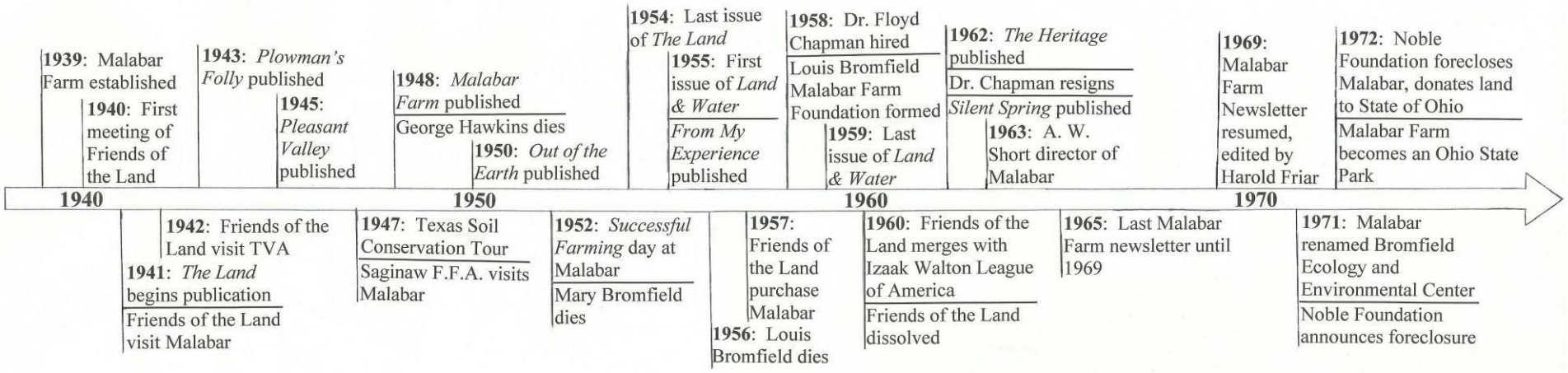


Figure 2: Timeline of major events at Malabar Farm from 1939-1972, including the publication of Bromfield's farm books and other relevant literature.

Methods

Research for this project was conducted in three phases during 2015, beginning in mid-January and concluding in early December. Work in the Spring 2015 semester (January to April 2015) was focused specifically on the history of Malabar Farm as recorded by materials in the Louis Bromfield Collection (SPEC.RARE.CMS.95), housed in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at The Ohio State University. This collection is open to students, faculty, and other researchers and is quite extensive, containing 150 boxes of materials including letters, manuscripts, and newspaper articles and including information about Malabar Farm both during Bromfield's lifetime and after his death. The majority of information relevant to this project was located in Boxes 131-142 of this collection, although historic photographs were also examined in Boxes 69-71. One day was also spent examining materials in the Louis Bromfield Miscellany (SPEC.RARE.CMS.207), especially articles in Box 6. Notes on these materials were taken in Gregg Shorthand (Figure 3) and transcribed within a week. In some cases photocopies were also made of diagrams, maps, and photographs from the collection.

A site visit to Malabar Farm State Park, near Lucas, Ohio, was made July 6-7, 2015 (Figure 4). Arrangements were made in advance for a private tour with Korre Boyer, park manager, and Thomas Bachelder, Malabar historian. Both Boyer and Bachelder were interviewed about Malabar Farm, with notes taken in Gregg Shorthand. Thomas Bachelder gave a tour of the Big House, including rooms not normally open to the public. Both Korre Boyer and Thomas Bachelder conducted a tour of the grounds, which included the Nieman Spring (Figure 5) and vegetable stand, the Mt. Olivet Cemetery where Bromfield is buried, the maple sugar shack, the upper and lower Pugh cabins, and the farm fields. The barns around the Big House, Mount Jeez, the historic Malabar Farm Restaurant, and several nature trails were also visited. Photographs of various locations at Malabar Farm were taken during this two-day period for comparison with historic photographs from the Louis Bromfield Collection.

Research during the Autumn 2015 semester (September to December 2015) was focused on the history of Friends of the Land. Every volume of *The Land* and *Land and Water*, the two Friends of the Land periodicals, was examined, although the amount of material necessitated that only articles relevant to the project were read thoroughly. Photocopies were made of relevant articles in both magazines (Figure 6). In November 2015, several trips were made to the Ohio History Center (800 E. 17th Ave., Columbus, OH 43211) to examine some materials not available in the OSU library system (Figures 7-8). The primary materials examined at OHC were the *Malabar Farm Newsletter* (Figure 9), published by the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation from 1959-1971, and materials from the Friends of the Land Records Papers (MSS 364). Only three boxes (11, 13, and 109) from the Friends of the Land Records could be examined due to time constraints, but the material in these boxes filled in some crucial gaps in the history of Malabar Farm and Friends of the Land and enabled the construction of a coherent historical narrative.

Additional information was also gathered from circulating library materials, including Louis Bromfield's books *Pleasant Valley* (1945), *Malabar Farm* (1948), *Out of the Earth*

(1950), and *From My Experience* (1955) (Figure 10). Although an exhaustive examination of all material on the subject was not possible, the sources examined over this 12-month period provide sufficient information to create an accurate historical account of the history of Malabar Farm from 1939-1972.

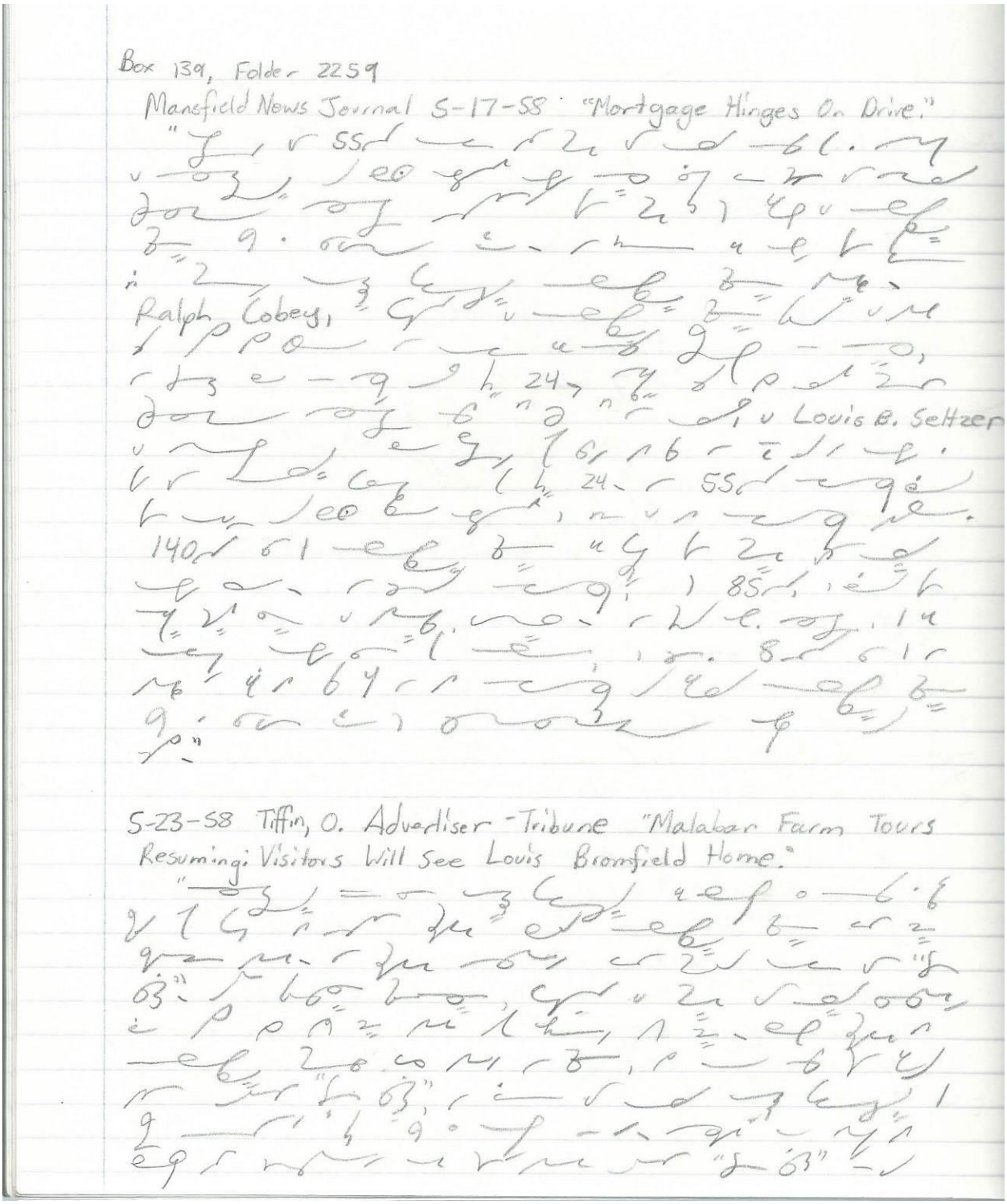


Figure 3: Typical page of notes taken in Gregg Shorthand. Archival protocol requires that all notes be taken in pencil. The first sentence of shorthand reads, "Repayment of the $55,000 loan to the Friends of the Land by a group of Mansfield and area residents hinges on the success of the current financial campaign conducted by the Friends for the operation of Malabar Farm as an ecological center."

Figure 4: The author in one of Bromfield's Jeeps at Malabar Farm, July 7, 2016.


Figure 5: The famous spring that still supplies water to the roadside vegetable stand.

THE LAND

VOLUME III REVIEW OF THE SPRING, 1944 NUMBER 3

REARED HIGH ON WASTE

An Analysis of the American Standard of Living

By Alfred H. Williams

THE total cost of this Second World War to date exceeds 900 billion dollars, and every hour that passes adds ten million dollars to that score. The business of war is to destroy. Indeed, one measure of the progress of an efficient army is the extent to which it destroys the lives and the matériel of the enemy and in the process of doing that evil, of course, it destroys its own. Within the hour, we shall have destroyed ten million dollars' worth of property. We are destroying a quarter of a billion dollars' worth of property a day, and about all that we can hope to get out of victory, is the retention of the status quo with respect to our liberty.

In contrast to that, the purpose of conservation is to maintain and to protect. Let us step aside for a few minutes from the business of global war in which so many of us are engaged and contemplate this theme. We need all the perspective we can get. This global manifestation of man's inhumanity to man raises the question: Are we not at the end of a fundamental era in human history, at an apex of destruction?

Consider the continent of North America, the continent that the white man saw when he stepped on to these shores. The physical configuration of a continent, as in the case of an animal, is determined largely by the skeleton. Here we had three large pieces of bony structure: In the West there were the western Himalayas, two high mountain ranges; within those ranges, a high, dry plateau extending all the way from Alaska down the North American continent through to South America. Over in the East we had the lower, smoother Appalachian chain, and up at Nova Scotia, swinging around in an arc, up around the Hudson Bay, we had the Laurentian Mountains.

Those three bony structures determined the physical configuration of this continent. Within those mountain barriers we had the greatest expanse of fertile land in a temperate zone that this world knew about. We had broad, level, rolling ground, abundant rainfall, plenty of water. We had a land rich in minerals, especially coal and iron and copper and petroleum. It was easily approachable from the European side. It was

Figure 6: Page from *The Land*, Volume III, Number 3.

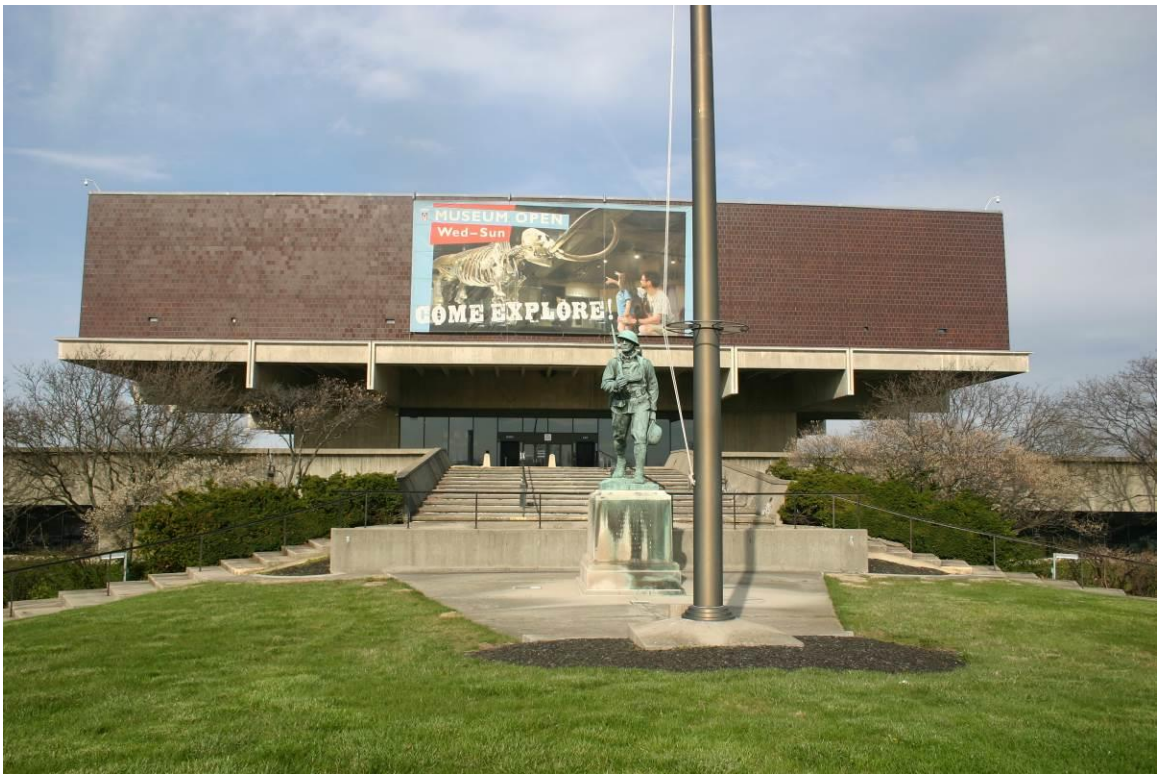
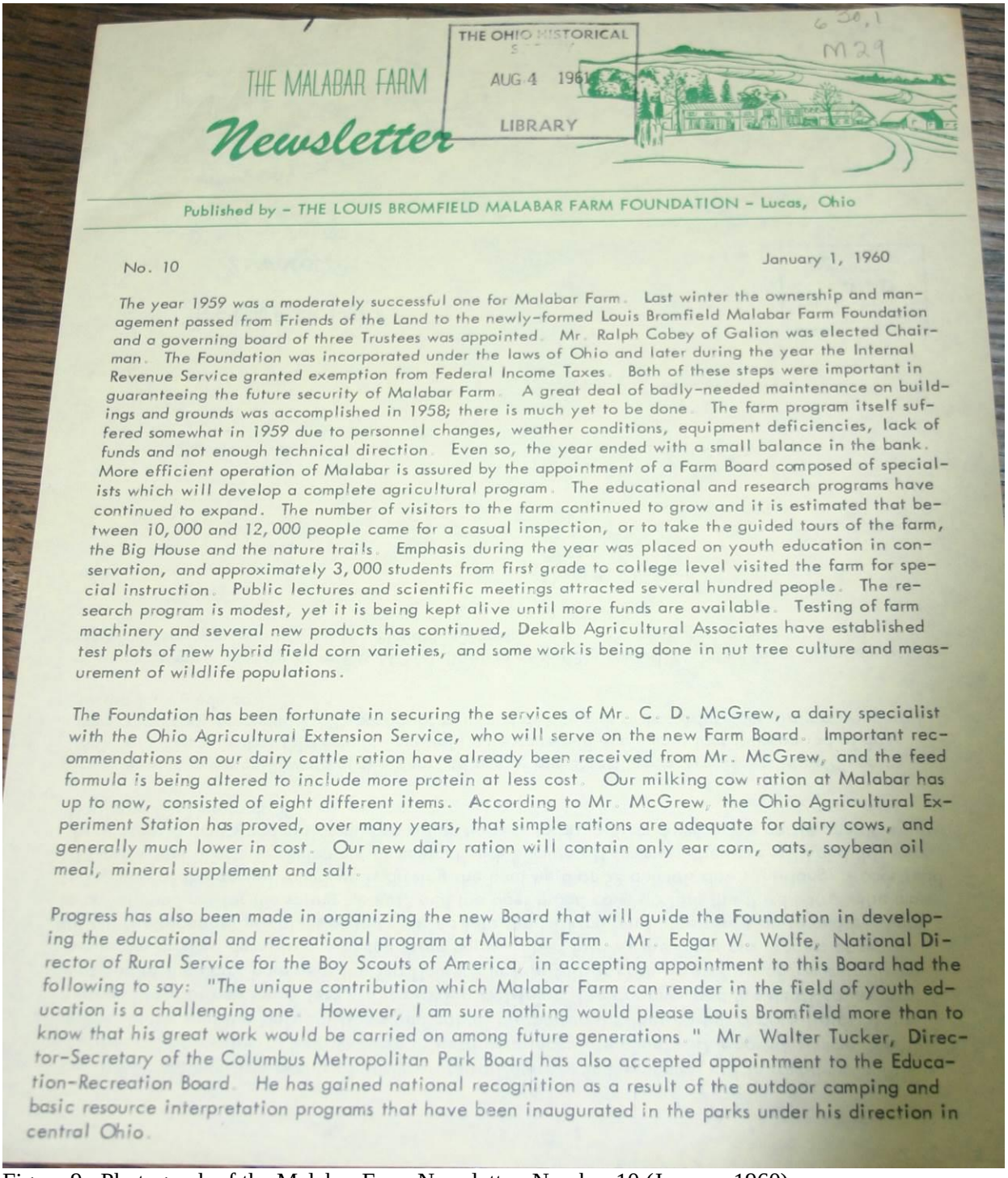


Figure 7: The Ohio History Center, Columbus, Ohio, viewed from the east. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, April 6, 2016.


Figure 8: Entrance to the Ohio History Center. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, April 6, 2016.



THE OHIO HISTORICAL
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THE MALABAR FARM
Newsletter

Published by – THE LOUIS BROMFIELD MALABAR FARM FOUNDATION – Lucas, Ohio

No. 10 January 1, 1960

The year 1959 was a moderately successful one for Malabar Farm. Last winter the ownership and management passed from Friends of the Land to the newly-formed Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation and a governing board of three Trustees was appointed. Mr. Ralph Cobey of Galion was elected Chairman. The Foundation was incorporated under the laws of Ohio and later during the year the Internal Revenue Service granted exemption from Federal Income Taxes. Both of these steps were important in guaranteeing the future security of Malabar Farm. A great deal of badly-needed maintenance on buildings and grounds was accomplished in 1958; there is much yet to be done. The farm program itself suffered somewhat in 1959 due to personnel changes, weather conditions, equipment deficiencies, lack of funds and not enough technical direction. Even so, the year ended with a small balance in the bank. More efficient operation of Malabar is assured by the appointment of a Farm Board composed of specialists which will develop a complete agricultural program. The educational and research programs have continued to expand. The number of visitors to the farm continued to grow and it is estimated that between 10,000 and 12,000 people came for a casual inspection, or to take the guided tours of the farm, the Big House and the nature trails. Emphasis during the year was placed on youth education in conservation, and approximately 3,000 students from first grade to college level visited the farm for special instruction. Public lectures and scientific meetings attracted several hundred people. The research program is modest, yet it is being kept alive until more funds are available. Testing of farm machinery and several new products has continued, Dekalb Agricultural Associates have established test plots of new hybrid field corn varieties, and some work is being done in nut tree culture and measurement of wildlife populations.

The Foundation has been fortunate in securing the services of Mr. C. D. McGrew, a dairy specialist with the Ohio Agricultural Extension Service, who will serve on the new Farm Board. Important recommendations on our dairy cattle ration have already been received from Mr. McGrew, and the feed formula is being altered to include more protein at less cost. Our milking cow ration at Malabar has up to now, consisted of eight different items. According to Mr. McGrew, the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station has proved, over many years, that simple rations are adequate for dairy cows, and generally much lower in cost. Our new dairy ration will contain only ear corn, oats, soybean oil meal, mineral supplement and salt.

Progress has also been made in organizing the new Board that will guide the Foundation in developing the educational and recreational program at Malabar Farm. Mr. Edgar W. Wolfe, National Director of Rural Service for the Boy Scouts of America, in accepting appointment to this Board had the following to say: "The unique contribution which Malabar Farm can render in the field of youth education is a challenging one. However, I am sure nothing would please Louis Bromfield more than to know that his great work would be carried on among future generations." Mr. Walter Tucker, Director-Secretary of the Columbus Metropolitan Park Board has also accepted appointment to the Education-Recreation Board. He has gained national recognition as a result of the outdoor camping and basic resource interpretation programs that have been inaugurated in the parks under his direction in central Ohio.

Figure 9: Photograph of the Malabar Farm Newsletter, Number 10 (January 1960).

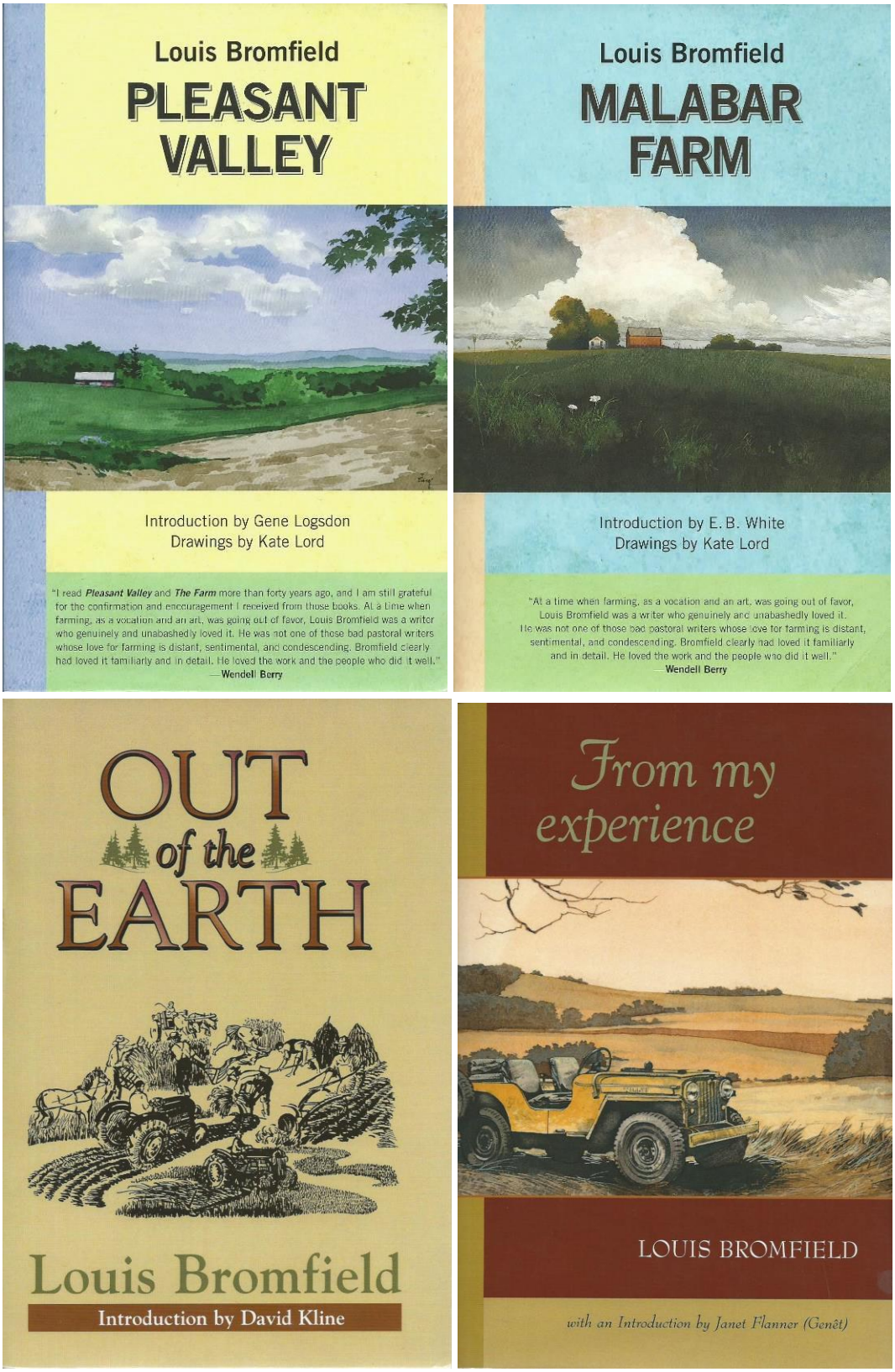


Figure 10: Louis Bromfield's four farm books, reprinted by the Wooster Book Company.

Vanishing Land: The Soil Conservation Crisis of the 1930s-'40s

> It is an old story, often repeated in the time of Man…Over vast areas we stand confronted with defaced landscapes, depleted water supplies, grave dislocations in the hydrologic cycle, and an all but catastrophic degradation of soil and Man. We have hurt our land. (Friends, 1941, p. 11).

1939 was a critical time for agriculture in the United States. A century and a half of constant Westward expansion had come to an end; there was no longer a frontier or free land available from Uncle Sam for anyone who would bring it into agricultural production. Always before, the American continent had seemed so vast that its resources were considered inexhaustible. If one forest was clear-cut, there was another, larger forest farther West; if iron or copper ore was mined out, there were new deposits to discover; and if poorly farmed land no longer gave high yields of corn or cotton, there were thousands of virgin acres just waiting to be cleared and farmed. Farmers had little incentive to conserve resources for their sons or grandsons because they could always move on to unspoiled land. As a result, they farmed for immediate profit, with little concern for the long-term health or productivity of the land. They "took everything off the land…and put nothing back" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 126).

While this exploitation of the land had helped fuel the industrialization of the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the consequences began to catch up with farmers shortly after World War I. A dry period in the 1930s in the wheat farming areas of the Great Plains soon turned into one of the worst ecological disasters of the 20th century, commonly known as the Dust Bowl (Figure 11). A "speculative one crop farming system" based on wheat left little crop residue on the soil surface (Finnell, 1945, p. 220). Crop failures due to drought and exposed soil soon resulted in massive wind erosion, creating dust storms that eventually left over 6 million acres of land so damaged that they had to be retired from agriculture. Nearly 4 million of these acres were marginal for farming and should never have been tilled in the first place (Finnell, 1945, p. 221). The massive economic downturn known as the "Great Depression" was partially caused by unsustainable farming practices, including soil erosion from excessive tillage, speculative over-production of crops that produced surpluses and caused prices to collapse, farmer debt incurred from buying expensive machinery in times of high prices, and growing crops in regions that were really too dry but had experienced several abnormally wet years.

The Dust Bowl was dramatic and was the primary reason Congress established the Soil Conservation Service—after a severe dust storm that reached Washington, D. C. provided a compelling visual aid to Dr. Hugh H. Bennett's persuasive talk on the importance of soil conservation (Figure 12). Yet these dust storms, though spectacular, were by no means the only problem, or even the worst. Perhaps more subtle, but potentially even more dangerous for agriculture, was the water erosion across most of the United States which began with sheet and rill erosion and, when unchecked, resulted in huge gullies in fields and an enormous loss of topsoil. The root cause of the water erosion was the same as the wind erosion: exposed soils

without adequate vegetative cover, which were easily detached and transported downhill during rainstorms (Figure 13). Row crops, such as corn, were planted straight up and down hills, "and every time it rained each furrow between the standing corn became a miniature gully, carrying off the precious rainfall as rapidly as possible and bearing with it the good topsoil that remained" (Bromfield, 1948, p. 227) (Figure 14). When the topsoil washed off the fields, it took with it any remaining plant nutrients and organic matter—sometimes eroding completely down to bedrock or hard, infertile clay.

This water erosion was not limited to crop fields in the Midwest or South. Even worse water erosion was occurring in the West, on land that ironically received only a few inches of rainfall per year. Here the main culprits were deforestation and overgrazing by cattle and sheep, which together left the soil on previously vegetated hills bare and ready to wash off whenever a rainstorm occurred. One extreme example of the devastation of this erosion was what happened to Main Street in Silver City, New Mexico, known by 1942 simply as the Big Ditch:

> Main Street in Silver City, New Mexico, a town of some 5,000 people, has simply and irrevocably gone out of existence. Even the ground on which the street lay has gone, and where heavy ore wagons once rolled, and cow ponies used to drowse on three legs, there is now is only vacancy, thin air…The bed of it lies from twenty-five to nearly fifty feet below the level of adjacent ground…But the most extraordinary thing about it is not its size, but its suddenness—the fact that within the memory of citizens still living in Silver City, neither the deep gash nor the bridge had come into existence. (Calvin, 1942, p. 121)

When Silver City was originally platted out, an existing arroyo was used as the main street because it was level and nearly free of brush (Calvin, 1942, p. 123). Up through 1891, Main Street was still at the level of the surrounding area, and soon impressive buildings were built along both sides. One of these buildings was the office of the Silver City Enterprise, a substantial brick building (Calvin, 1942, p. 122). As the city grew, the foothills above the town were overgrazed by livestock, destroying most of the grass. The trees and shrubs were cut for firewood, fence posts, and mine props, and soon the hills were bare of vegetation (Calvin, 1942, p. 123). With no vegetation left to hold back rainwater on the hills, soon Main Street became prone to floods. The first devastating flood occurred in 1895, which caused significant damage to Main Street. A much worse flood in 1902 destroyed half of the Enterprise building. Dramatically, Judge Newcomb's grand piano, which was on the second floor of the building, was washed seven miles downstream by the floodwaters (Calvin, 1942, p. 123)! After that, Main Street became known as the Big Ditch, and a bridge had to be built over it at the main intersection to allow people to travel from one side of the city to another (Calvin, 1942, p. 123) (Figure 15).

Soil erosion was destroying farm fields and causing floods downstream, but another problem was the eroded silt from agricultural land. This silt clogged dams almost as soon as they were built, blocked tile drainages from fields, and filled in drainage ditches. Louis Bromfield described this problem of silted up drainage in a chapter in *Malabar Farm* called "The

Story of Kemper's Run." When this creek was silted up with topsoil lost from the fields, the local authorities deepened and straightened it to allow flood waters to run off more readily (Bromfield, 1948, p. 228). Bromfield reports that, "The big ditch did no good because within a year or two it was silted up again with the millions of tons of topsoil that came off the bare eroding cornfields, and within a short time the 'fall' for drainage ditches and tile was gone again and the mouths of the tiles buried beneath layers of topsoil, fertilizer, and mud from the sloping fields that bordered Kemper's Run" (Bromfield, 1948, p. 228). The deposits of topsoil washed down such ditches could be quite large, as Bromfield discovered when he dug a pond near the Bailey Place at Malabar Farm. He found tiles buried 15 feet below the surface of the ground, and even discovered an old farm bridge buried beneath 6 feet of deposited eroded soil (Bromfield, 1950, p. 145)!

Soil was not the only resource being recklessly destroyed during this time period. Another serious problem was the clear-cutting of virgin forests. The forests of the East and South had been completely logged out, and while some second-growth timber had grown back, it was not enough to be logged commercially. The Great Lakes region had been almost completely logged out, save a small section of virgin timber in the Porcupine Mountains of Michigan, which was forecasted to be harvested by 1948 (Watts, 1943, p. 262)—and was saved in the nick of time by the establishment of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. Farther west, only a tenth of the virgin timber in Idaho remained, and the only undeveloped area left was in southern Oregon and a few other inaccessible regions of the Pacific Northwest. Harvesting of forests was proceeding much more rapidly than reforestation efforts, although in northern Michigan the Civilian Conservation Corps had made significant progress in reforestation during the 1930s, which was not mentioned in the article by Watts cited above.

Yet another conservation issue, related to both soil erosion and deforestation, was the construction of dams in the name of "flood control" (Reid, 1943, p. 267). In many cases these dams were constructed primarily for hydroelectric generation, irrigation, and navigation with no regard to their effects on fish and other aquatic life—although they could have been made much less destructive to wildlife with only slight modifications (Reid, 1943, p. 267). The W.P.A. had enabled the construction of many massive dams during the period of the 1930s, often with very little regard for the environment. Ironically, many of these structures created for "flood control" on the lower sections of large rivers like the Mississippi did little good by the time silt-laden floodwaters reached them (Bromfield, 1950, p. 178). The real problem was upstream where rainwater was running off fields and eroding them rather than infiltrating into the soil.

The list of problems went on from there to encompass almost every area of life. In southeastern Ohio, coal was being strip-mined, leaving massive tracts of land completely destroyed and unsuitable for farming, as well as displacing entire communities that had once contained prosperous farms (Figures 16-17):

> Take one farm, the 160-acre farm occupied by Leslie B. Giffen and his family. They were good farmers, active church and community workers and Mr. Giffen was a director in the Union National Bank. But the coal strippers bought the fine

> grazing and crop land at about three times its normal price. Mr. Giffen and his family moved to Urbana and the shovels moved in. The entire farm is a series of worthless unsightly, impassible spoil bank ridges. The ruin is worse than that by fire or flood for it is permanent. This farm has lost its tax value; it is unproductive and provides no income; its occupants have moved away, harming this community and all other property within miles. (Ronsheim, 1948, p. 213)

Pollution was also a serious issue in the 1940s. At this time, cities were still discharging raw sewage into rivers, in addition to industrial waste from every type of manufacturing and refining operation. Air pollution was also a problem. One extreme example of the dangers of air pollution from industry was the city of Donora, Pennsylvania, where the Public Health Service finally became concerned about the pollution after 17 people died in one evening in October, 1948 (Etter, 1950, pp. 185-186). Donora was an industrial town and the air was so thick with smoke that almost all vegetation had died in the town and on the surrounding hillsides. The inhabitants suffered from lung problems and sometimes attempted to grow gardens, but they did not survive (Etter, 1950, p. 190). The lack of vegetation on the hillsides had resulted in erosion, so much that even in the town cemetery, "gullies were eating down into the solemn soil. Monuments, walls, markers and fallen vases were tumbling into them…Even the dead cannot rest peacefully in Donora" (Etter, 1950, p. 191) (Figure 18).

Perhaps the worst symptom of the degradation of land at this time was how it impacted people. In addition to the farmers plunged into poverty due to poor farming practices and those who had to leave their land when it became too eroded to farm, malnutrition was very prevalent due both to poor diets and loss of minerals (such as calcium and iron) from soils. One-half of the young men drafted for World War II were rejected by the military because they were physically unfit due to bad teeth, eye defects, and cardiovascular diseases (Lord, 1942, p. 280). Much of this was caused by nutritional deficiencies which went back to the soils on which crops were raised. In 1917, Dr. Firman Bear was able to pick out which students in his soils class at the Ohio State University came from the limestone regions of Ohio because they were bigger and stronger than the others due to the higher calcium levels of the limestone soils (Lord, 1949, p. 42). Part of this deficiency was caused not merely by poor soils but by excessive food processing to create white flour and white sugar. The processing of wheat to create white flour removed most of the thiamin and other essential minerals (Rorty, 1946, p. 256). Excessive consumption of foods containing processed sugars and starches and insufficient fruits and vegetables was one of the leading causes of tooth decay (Miller, 1946, p. 342).

This is only a short list of the conservation problems in the United States in 1939; every region was faced with variations of these issues and more besides. It was becoming increasingly apparent that the American "high standard of living" had only come about through exploitation and degradation of natural resources (Williams, 1944, p. 236). The looming cloud of World War II only made the problem worse, because war focuses only on destruction and creating weapons and not on conserving resources and trying to manage them in a sustainable manner. Americans finally had to face the reality that many of the advances they had made during the 19th and early

20th centuries had only come about by exploiting resources more rapidly than they could ever be regenerated. The United States was at a conservation crossroads, with two main choices: to continue to exploit natural resources until they were gone, after which their society would suddenly collapse; or to begin conserving resources in order to leave something for future generations to live on.

In 1938, just as people were becoming aware of these conservation issues, a man named Louis Bromfield returned to the United States after a long sojourn in France. He may not have realized it at the time, but soon he would be at the forefront of the newly-established soil conservation movement, and the farm he established, named "Malabar Farm," would become "the most famous farm in the world." Before beginning the history of Malabar Farm, it is necessary to start with some background information on the man who started it all—Louis Bromfield.

Figure 11: Photograph taken during the Dust Bowl. USDA NRCS photo.

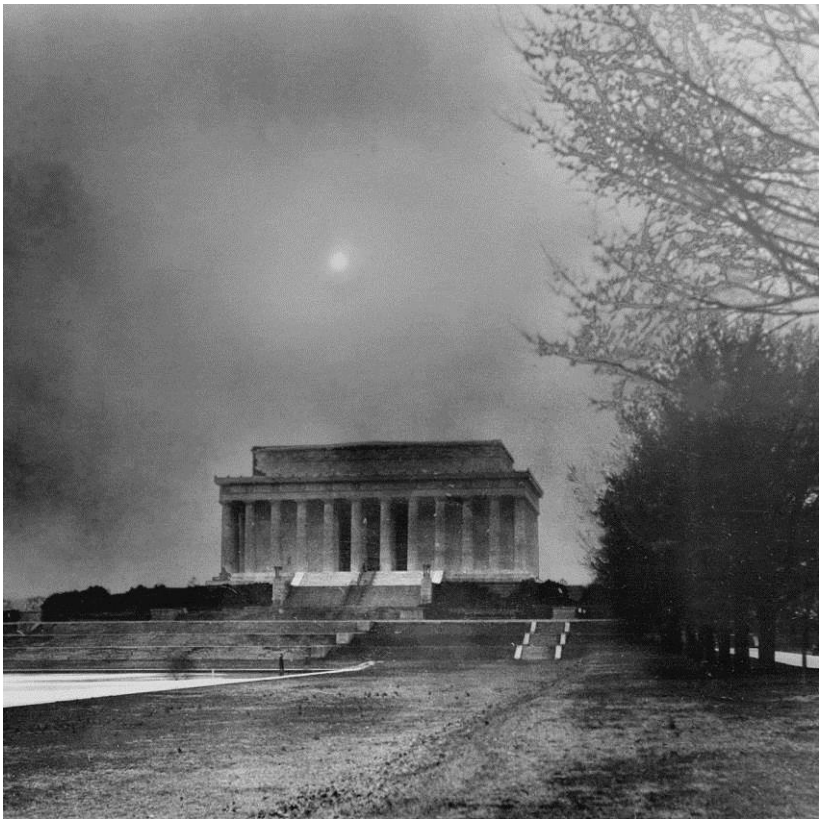


Figure 12: Dust storms from the Great Plains carried suspended soil particles as far east as Washington, D.C., and into the Atlantic Ocean. USDA NRCS photo.

Figure 13: Sheet and rill erosion on exposed soil in Wayne County, Ohio, 1953. Photo from OARDC Photo Archives, Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, The Ohio State University.

Figure 14: Soil erosion in Wayne County, Ohio, 1953. Photo from OARDC Photo Archives, Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, The Ohio State University.

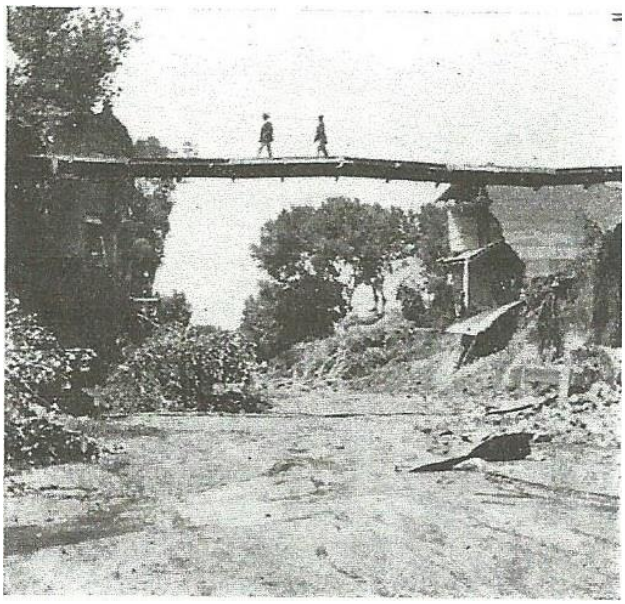
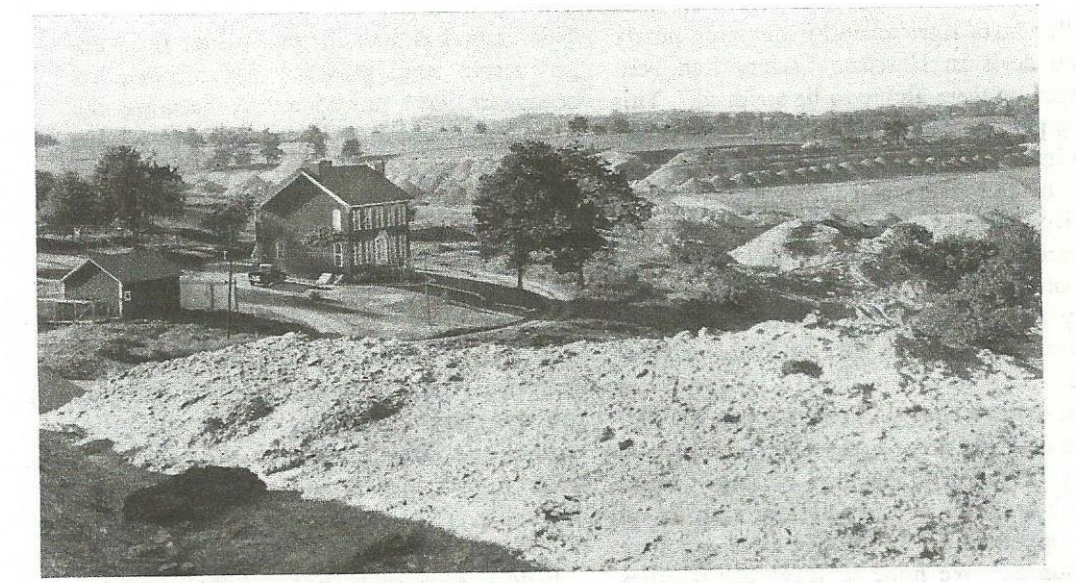


Figure 15: The Big Ditch. Original caption reads: "This was Main Street. This swinging foot bridge was erected at the intersection of Main Street and Broadway, Silver City, New Mexico, after the first great washout, but before the flood of August 24, 1902, which cut even deeper and swept this bridge away. At the right are the ruins of the Enterprise building from which Judge Newcomb's piano bounced away with the rain." From Calvin, 1942.



Stewart Harris' farm, 2 miles south of Cadiz, is in process of stripping. All of the land in the background is to be stripped, and the same applies in all directions for miles.

Figure 16: Ohio farm in process of being strip-mined. From Ronsheim, 1948.

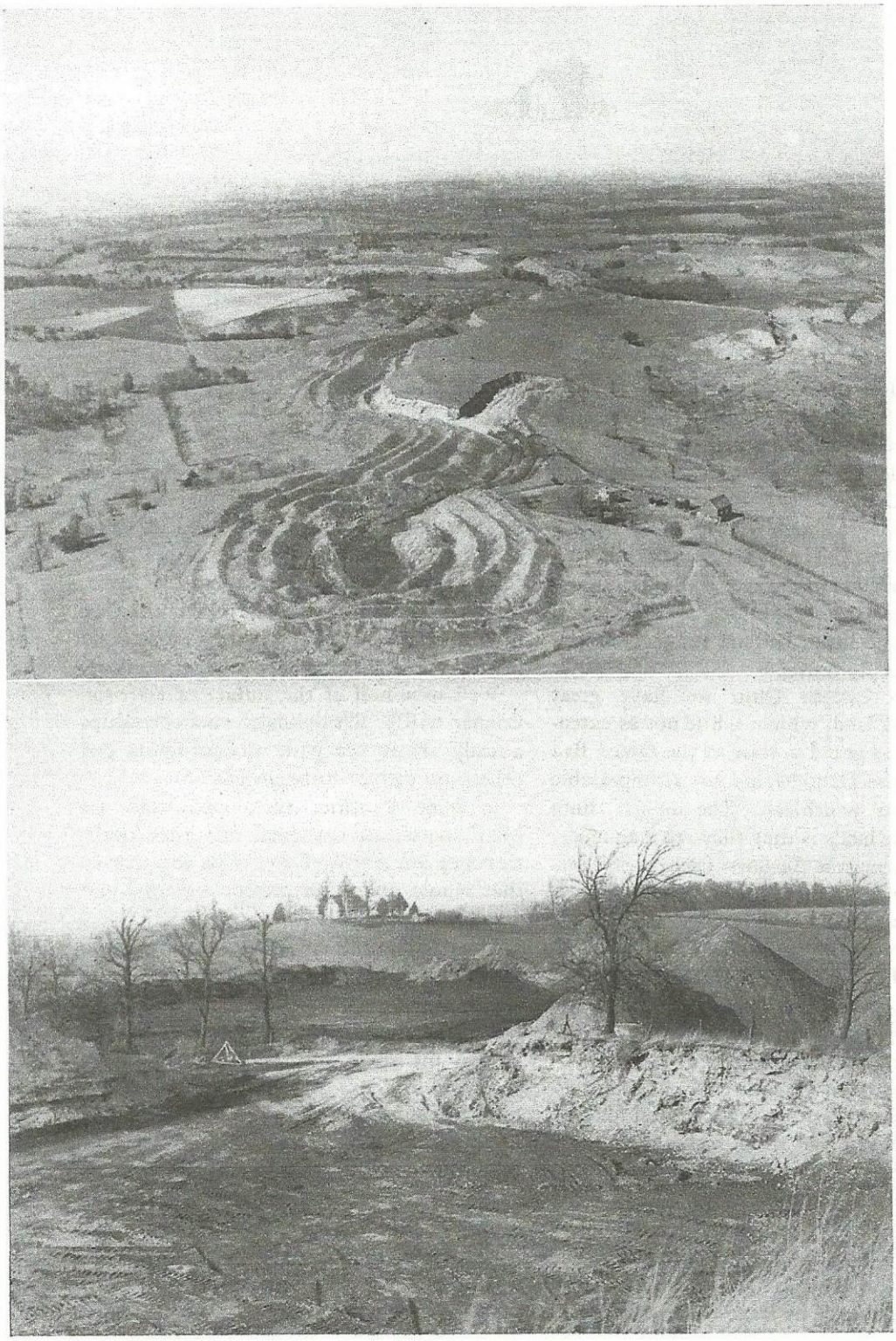
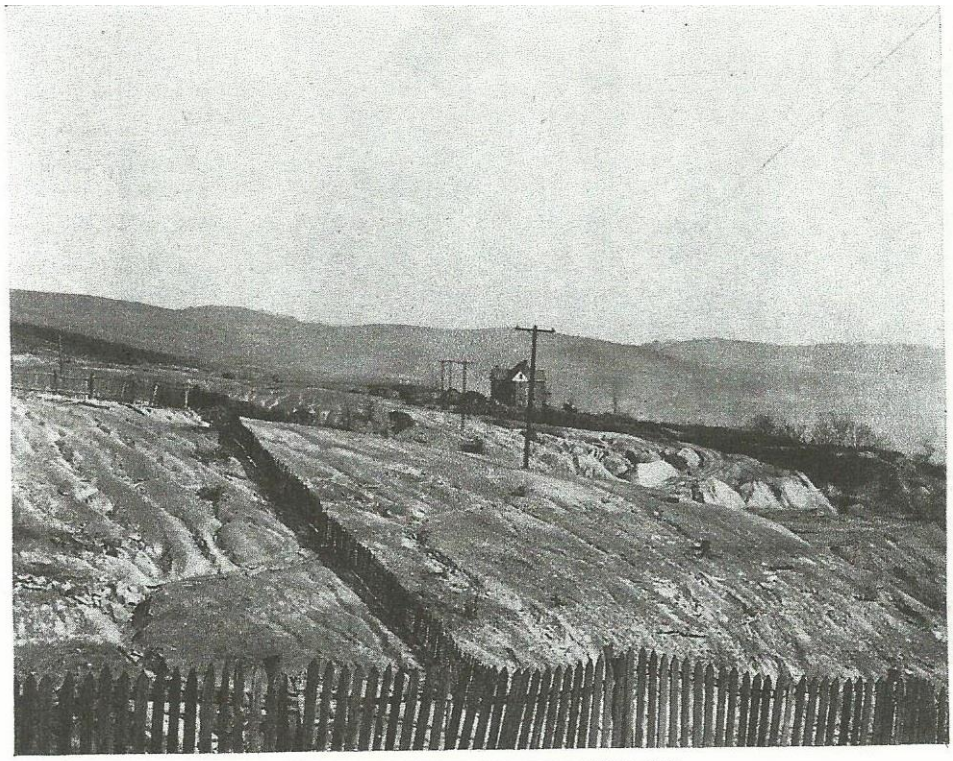


Figure 17: Strip mining in Ohio, from Ronsheim, 1948.



DESOLATE HILLS AND HUMAN LIVES

BARED BY THE RAINS

"Even the dead cannot rest peacefully in Donora."

Figure 18: Two images of desolation at Donora. Above, hillsides erode because air pollution killed the vegetation. Below, even the cemetery is eroding due to lack of vegetation. From Etter, 1950.

Louis Bromfield

It is impossible to discuss the history of Malabar Farm without first introducing Louis Bromfield, the man who started it all. Louis Bromfield was born in Mansfield, Ohio on December 27, 1896 to Charles and Annette Brumfield (Scott, 1998, p.3). He was originally christened "Lewis Brucker Brumfield," but later changed his last name to "Bromfield" and adopted the more French spelling of "Louis" for his first name. He was the second child born to his mother, who had been told by her doctor after the birth of the first that she would be unable to have any more children. When she began to show signs of pregnancy ten years later, the doctor said that she must have a tumor, but she knew he was wrong and regarded the subsequent birth of her son, Lewis Brumfield, as a miracle (Bromfield, 1933, pp. 306-307). Bromfield's mother believed in "pre-natal influence" and decided that her son was destined to be a writer, so she purchased a whole library of books for him to read as soon as he was old enough (Bromfield, 1933, pp. 291-293).

Bromfield's family lived in Mansfield, but when he was a boy the farm where his mother had been raised and which had been in the family since the days of the first settlers was still owned by his grandparents. Later in life, Bromfield wrote an autobiographical novel about his family's heritage, called *The Farm*. As a boy, Bromfield loved the farm, but his mother did not want him to become a farmer because she wanted him to be prosperous in life, and she encouraged him to leave as soon as he was able (Bromfield, 1933, p. 329). Bromfield wanted to see the world, but he also had a love for the land; among other interests, his father engaged in a sort of land speculation business where he would buy worn-out farms, partially restore them, and sell them again. Bromfield left Mansfield in 1914 to study farming at Cornell Agricultural College, where he stayed for one year (Bromfield, 1945, p. 53)—or rather only half of one year, because he left Cornell in December to return home (Scott, 1998, p. 24).

Bromfield came home both because he did not have the money to continue at Cornell and because his grandfather had broken his hip and could no longer run the family farm. His family sold the house in town and Bromfield helped run the family farm for a year. It was a losing enterprise, for the land had been farmed by tenants for many years and did not produce the bounty that it had even a generation previous. The critical point for Bromfield, at least as he described it in *The Farm*, came soon after the death of his grandfather. He was working in the fields and heard the sound of rolling-mills in Mansfield, manufacturing shells for World War I (Bromfield, 1933, p. 343). In *Pleasant Valley*, he explained that he was too restless to consider spending the rest of his life tied down to one piece of land and, encouraged by his mother, decided to be a writer instead (Bromfield, 1945, p. 54). The family farm was sold at this time and Bromfield left to begin exploring the world.

When Bromfield made the decision to become a writer, he enrolled in Columbia University as a journalism major, beginning the fall of 1916 (Anderson, p. 24). He did not finish the school year, but volunteered to be an ambulance driver in France with the French Army. When the war was over in 1919, Bromfield remained in France for a time and then returned to the United States, where he worked as a reporter for the New York City News Service and went

on to several other writing jobs (Anderson, p. 24). He married Mary Appleton Wood in 1921 and in 1924 published his first novel, *The Green Bay Tree* (Forman, 1956). His 1926 novel *Early Autumn* was awarded the 1927 Pulitzer Prize (Anderson, 1964, p. 46), and Bromfield soon became a famous author. He wrote over 30 books in his lifetime, turning out about a book a year. Other biographers and historians, including Ivan Scott and David Anderson, have analyzed Bromfield's fiction works in great detail, and readers interested in more detail on Bromfield's literary career before he purchased Malabar Farm can consult these sources.

One of Bromfield's novels, however, is relevant to the history of Malabar Farm because it gives some insight into his farming philosophy during his time in Europe. In 1933, during a bout of homesickness, he wrote *The Farm*, an autobiographical and somewhat nostalgic novel describing the history of the family farm which he had lost back in 1916. Bromfield's description of his grandparents' farm shows that he indeed had a love for the land and the abundant produce that he remembered as a child. He understood very well that the way of life he longed for no longer existed, and he attributed the decline of the American family farm mainly to political and economic factors, personified in *The Farm* as Bentham the peddler, an early entrepreneur who came to "The Town" at the same time as the Colonel, Bromfield's great-grandfather. *The Farm* ends rather tragically, with the assertion that the peddler had won, that the good farming ideals of Bromfield's ancestors had lost the fight against a greedy society intent only on making money, often by unscrupulous means. A glimpse of Bromfield's philosophy about the decline of agriculture in America during his sojourn in Europe is revealed in a letter which he wrote from Senlis, France, to a Mrs. Gladys Edsall in Kent, England, in the early 1930s (Figures 19-20):

> Dear Mrs. Edsall,
> This is a line to thank you for this thoughtful and understanding letter about "The Farm." I am delighted that it gave you pleasure, although that pleasure like mine in writing the book, was largely a nostalgic one. It is difficult to answer with any authority the questions you pose as to the reason for the decay of the old life—as difficult as it is to offer a solution. I suspect that a blight fell upon the land with the rise of the industrial and banking forces of the Nineteenth Century, indeed with this whole capitalistic development. I also suspect that that era is coming to an end everywhere in America as well as Europe. Certainly it is true with us. The whole triumph of Roosevelt in the recent elections was the triumph of the Jeffersonian-Freud philosophy of the land and the agrarian principles, and it seems to me extremely unlikely that the old forms will ever again gain the upper hand. The whole capitalist-industrialist-banker system has broken down. It is a failure and something more secure and reasonable must be found. I think the land is certain to regain its old prestige and dignity, perhaps in a new form. It will perhaps interest you to know that "The Farm" has been made compulsory collateral reading [in] a good many American schools and universities. I hope it will have an effect. With best wishes, thanking you again I am yours faithfully, Louis Bromfield. (Bromfield, c. 1934)

While Bromfield was writing the novels that earned him a literary fortune, he traveled around the world and lived at times in England, France, Switzerland, India, New York, and Hollywood. Eventually he settled down in Senlis, France, in an old *presbytére* which he leased for fifty years (Bromfield, 1945, p. 68) from three old ladies. They would not sell it to him, for they knew that the land was worth more than any amount of money (Scott, 1998, p. 138). They felt that the land was permanent, but money could be devalued, as was in fact the case during the war. Bromfield was happy in Senlis and might have stayed there for the rest of his life if not for the ominous shadow of World War II. He sent his wife and children back to America but stayed in France himself until his good friend, Louis Gillet, urged him to return. Gillet told Bromfield, "You must return home. There is nothing you can do here that a Frenchman could not do. You can go home and tell your people what is happing here, what is bound to come. Tell them they will not be able to escape it—to be prepared and ready…Go home and tell your people. You can help France most by doing just that" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 9).

Bromfield returned home, to the land he had known as a child, to Pleasant Valley, near Lucas, Ohio. He returned in the winter and saw the farms and hills that he remembered from his childhood, covered with snow and ice. He describes very eloquently in *Pleasant Valley* his first impressions of the valley and the history of the four farms which he purchased, which he called "The Ferguson Place," "The Anson Place," "The Fleming Place," and "The Bailey Place." Some of the names were fictional but the farms were not; he substituted "Anson" for Herring, "Fleming" for Beck, and "Bailey" for Schrack or Nieman. Later, in his book *From My Experience*, Bromfield realized that he returned to Ohio with a sense of nostalgia, longing for a way of life which he remembered from his childhood but which no longer existed. When the snow melted in the spring, he "discovered that the valley of my childhood was no longer there. Something had happened to it. It had been ravaged by time and by the cruel and careless treatment of the land" (Bromfield, 1955, p. 7).

The rest of Bromfield's life would be focused on this approximately 600-acre piece of land, which he named "Malabar Farm" after the beautiful southwest coast of India where he had lived with his family for several months (Bromfield, 1945, p. 70). Soon after purchasing the farm, Bromfield commissioned the Mansfield architect Louis Lamoreux to construct a one-of-a kind house on the property, which was called "The Big House" and took 18 months to build. Bromfield wanted the house to look like it had been built and added on to over many years, so it had architectural styles from many different periods of Ohio history. It was an expensive house but Bromfield built it to be lived in. Many years later, Louis Lamoreux, the architect, recalled, "He seemed to abhor orderliness. He loved things 'used,' and with the aid of his dogs, many guests, children and the continual flow of activity, the place soon looked as if it had always been there" ("Lonesome for 'Big House,'" 1972). Bromfield had three daughters, who had their own living room near their bedrooms on the second floor of the house. He shared his combined office/bedroom with his faithful Boxer dogs, and his wife, Mary, had an adjoining bedroom. Bromfield's secretary and manager, George Hawkins, had a room above Bromfield's study which was connected to it by a back staircase.

Much of the information in the following chapters about the work that Louis Bromfield accomplished at Malabar during his lifetime is drawn from the four farm books that he published, which are primarily an autobiographical account of Bromfield's work at Malabar. *Pleasant Valley* is the first, published in 1945, and describes Bromfield's return to Ohio, his purchase of Malabar Farm, and the soil restoration work that he began to accomplish at Malabar during World War II. *Malabar Farm*, published in 1948, continues the story, with technical chapters on farming and soil restoration interspersed with the "Malabar Journal" and stories about the animals and other interesting things at Malabar. *Out of the Earth*, published in 1950, is a complete description of Bromfield's farming philosophy and the work that he had accomplished at Malabar. *From My Experience* is one of the last books that Bromfield published, in 1955, and contains chapters on farming and soils as well as some lighter stories. Sometimes *Animals and Other People* is considered to be one of Bromfield's farm books as well, but it is mainly a compilation of stories previously published in his other books and does not contain much new material. Thanks to the Wooster Publishing Company of Wooster, Ohio, all of Bromfield's farm books have been recently reprinted and are available in paperback.

The question has been raised by historians as to whether or not Bromfield's farm books give an accurate portrayal of what was actually happening at Malabar. Many believe that Bromfield was prone to exaggeration in his books, and there were a couple instances where he got very excited about something which didn't work in reality, such as his glowing account of the hay-drying barn in *From My Experience*. Certainly, Bromfield tended to emphasize the positive aspects of his restoration work, and he did not mention the personality conflicts and family feuds that probably made life at Malabar less pleasant than he portrayed in his books. He generally only mentioned negative events when they made a good story, such as his chapter titled "The Bad Year, or Pride Goeth Before a Fall" in *Malabar Farm*. There are also several instances where he may have altered the chronology of events or omitted ones that he deemed insignificant to make the story flow better, especially when he talks about the circumstances that led up to the purchase of Malabar Farm. Thus it is necessary to consult other sources to date events accurately, although undoubtedly Bromfield's autobiographical accounts give the best description of what he thought or felt about certain events.

From an agricultural and soil conservation point of view, however, Bromfield's farming philosophy is sound. He learned from scientific experts in the field as well as his own experiences and much of what he promoted back in the '40's and '50's is now taught today as good agriculture. Most of the agricultural ideas that Bromfield advocated did not originate with him; *The Land* and *Land and Water* contain many articles describing practices that Bromfield also mentions in his books. In addition to Bromfield's books, there are dozens of accounts by other people who visited Malabar Farm during Bromfield's lifetime and were impressed by his charismatic personality and by the very real soil conservation work that he was doing. Certainly there was little or no disconnect between what Bromfield wrote in his books and what people saw when they came to visit Malabar Farm. Thus, for the purpose of this research, Bromfield's

farm books are considered, with a few exceptions, to be an accurate portrayal of what was accomplished agriculturally at Malabar Farm during his lifetime.

Bromfield had a marked shift in farming philosophy between when he published *The Farm* in 1933 and when he published *Pleasant Valley* in 1945. Although he had been correct that capitalism and industrialism had played a role in the decline of the American family farm, he would realize soon after his return to the United States that there was more to the story than just political factors. It was not merely agrarian ideals that had been degraded; it was the land itself. Bromfield returned to the United States at a critical time in agricultural history, shortly after the birth of the modern soil conservation movement. The realization of the importance of soil conservation drastically changed Bromfield's view of farming, and within a couple years of his purchase of Malabar he became one of the most passionate advocates for soil conservation and restoration in the United States.

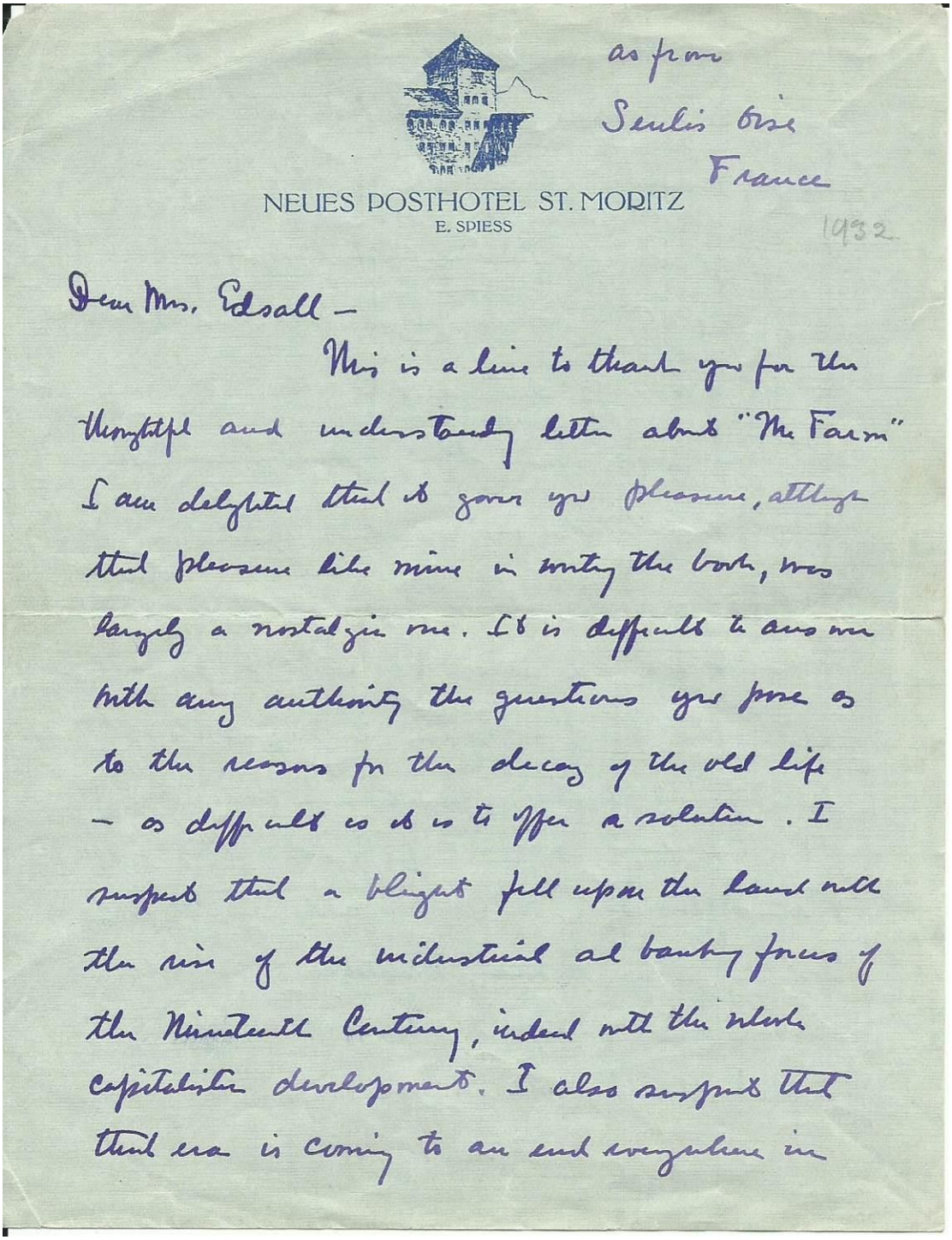
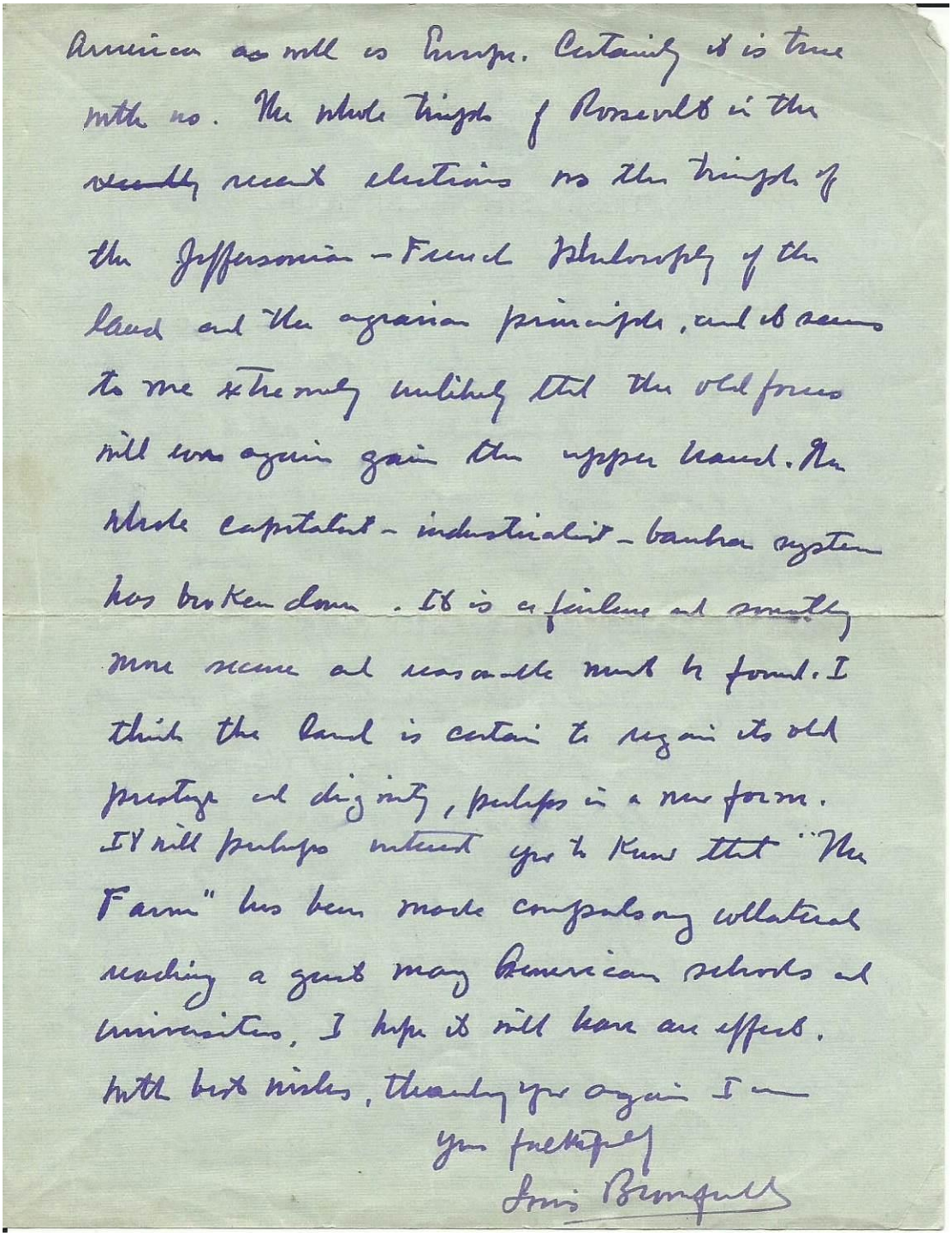


Figure 19: Front of letter written from Louis Bromfield to Mrs. Gladys Edsall in Kent, England, found in an old copy of *The Farm* purchased from an English used bookseller (Bromfield, c. 1934). The date 1932 is penciled on the letter, but is probably not accurate because *The Farm* was published in 1933 and Bromfield's comment about it being required reading in schools must have been written at least a year after the book was first published, but sometime prior to 1938 as that was when Bromfield left Senlis.



American as well as Europe. Certainly it is true with us. The whole trend of Roosevelt in the recently recent elections was the trend of the Jeffersonian - French philosophy of the land and the agrarian principle, and it seems to me the only unlikely that the old forces will ever again gain the upper hand. The whole capitalist - industrialist - banker system has broken down. It is a failure and some more secure and reasonable must be found. I think the land is certain to regain its old prestige and dignity, perhaps in a new form. I will perhaps interest you to know that "The Farm" has been made compulsory collateral reading a year by many American schools and universities. I hope it will have an effect. With best wishes, thanking you again I am

Yours faithfully

Louis Bromfield

Figure 20: Reverse side of the letter shown in Figure 19. Mrs. Edsall must have found Bromfield's distinctive handwriting difficult to read, because a copy of this letter in her own handwriting was also found in the same book, along with the original envelope. The copy of *The Farm* that the letter was found in was printed in 1946, but the letter certainly predates that copy because it was written during Bromfield's stay in Senlis, France, sometime between 1934 and 1938.

The Restoration Years: Malabar From 1940-1945

> I knew in my heart that we as a nation were already much farther along the path to destruction than most people knew. What we needed was a new kind of pioneer, not the sort which cut down the forests and burned off the prairies and raped the land, but pioneers who created new forests and healed and restored the richness of the country God had given us, that richness which, from the moment the first settlers landed on the Atlantic coast we had done our best to destroy. I had a foolish idea that I wanted to be one of that new race of pioneers. (Bromfield, 1945, p. 52).

When Bromfield first returned to Pleasant Valley in 1939 and knocked on the door of the Anson house, he saw only the nostalgic land of his childhood. It was not until spring came and the snow melted that he discovered that "the valley of my childhood was no longer there. Something had happened to it. It had been ravaged by time and by the cruel and careless treatment of the land" (Bromfield, 1955, p. 7). In *Pleasant Valley*, Bromfield gives the history of the farms that he purchased and how the soils were eroded, gullied, low in organic matter, and infertile from years of farming that "took everything from it and put nothing back" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 50). Bromfield took it as a challenge to restore this land back to productivity and, with the help of good agricultural information, he had amazing success in only a short period of time.

Inspired perhaps by his farm manager, Max Drake, new ideas coming from the agricultural universities, and by individuals like Edward Faulkner (an early critic of the moldboard plow), Bromfield soon became passionate about restoring the worn-out soils of the farms he had purchased to fertility and high production. Well aware that he was not up-to-date on modern agricultural methods, Bromfield surrounded himself with people who knew agriculture and could help make his farm productive once again. After much discussion, Bromfield and Max Drake agreed upon "The Plan" for Malabar. Bromfield's original vision for Malabar was for it to be self-sufficient, an island of security in a world troubled by wars, unrest, and rationing. Having lived in Europe through World War I and up to the beginning of World War II, Bromfield was more concerned about food shortages caused by war than many other Americans of his generation. Drake did not agree with Bromfield that self-sufficiency was necessary or even desirable, but Bromfield had convincing arguments for a self-sufficient farm and won out in the end, at least during the war years:

> On the point of self-sufficiency, Max's faith was less strong than my own, I think because his faith in machinery and in such economic pitfalls as the installment plan was greater than my own, and because he had never seen in this rich country the things I had witnessed and lived through in countries where there were inflation and food shortages and rationing, and discord and civil war…If and when such things did come, I wanted, I told Max, to be on my own land, on an island of security which could be a refuge not only for myself and my family but my friends as well…I meant to have as nearly everything as possible, not merely chickens and eggs and butter and milk and vegetables and fruit and the things

> which many foolish farmers buy today. I meant to have guinea fowl and ducks and geese and turkeys…grapes in abundance and plums and peaches, currants, gooseberries, asparagus…ponds which would produce a constant supply of fish…not only to operate the maple sugar bush again but also have bees which not only would fertilize crops but produce hundreds of pounds of honey. (Bromfield, 1945, pp. 63-64).

Bromfield describes his original vision for Malabar in *Pleasant Valley* in the chapter titled, "The Plan" (pp. 53-72). The first step was to halt erosion and restore the fertility of the soils which had been neglected for so many years. He wanted to raise livestock, and in the interest of soil fertility, to sell only animal products from the farm and not grain. He wanted to restore the woodlots and native pastures back to productivity. He wanted the farm to be self-sufficient and to support several families, not just one. "The Plan" was modeled after the Russian collective farm, except that Bromfield himself, "as the capitalist, was substituted for the state" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 66). He would provide housing, electricity, heat, and produce from the farm to the families who lived there in addition to a salary, and they in turn would farm the land and restore it back to productivity. The other families would live in some of the houses already present on the farm, while Bromfield himself lived in the "Big House."

With "The Plan" in place, Bromfield and his farm staff set out on the difficult work of restoring the soils at Malabar Farm. The first step was to check erosion, and following the advice of the United States Soil Conservation Service, Bromfield adopted contour farming and strip planting practices on the entire farm (Bromfield, 1945, p. 205). He removed old fencerows around square fields and created newer, larger fields which followed the contours of the hills and were also easier to work with tractors (Figure 21). Around these new contoured fields he established hedges of multiflora rose, which formed a natural, living fence that efficiently contained cattle and provided habitat for wildlife. This halted soil erosion and gully formation and, combined with conservation tillage, held in the moisture and kept rainwater on the land where it fell rather than letting it run off. Springs that had not flowed since the days of the early settlers began flowing again as the groundwater was replenished, providing water for the cattle in remote pastures and allowing Bromfield to construct several spring-fed farm ponds for fishing and swimming. In speaking of the springs, Bromfield said that, "What we had done was a simple thing; simply to restore the balance of Nature, to keep the water where it belonged, on our land rather than turning it loose down the long course of the rivers finally to reach the Gulf of Mexico. And now in drought time we had the water we had stored up underground during the seasons of good rainfall" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 307).

Another way that Bromfield halted erosion at Malabar was by implementing "trash farming" or "trashy plowing," which today would be called "conservation tillage." Bromfield was an early follower of Edward Faulkner, whose book *Plowman's Folly* describes the negative effects of moldboard plowing on soil health and advocates stirring the surface of the soil with a disc or harrow rather than inverting the soil. Bromfield agreed with Faulkner on most points but did argue that the moldboard plow was the only way to break up extremely hard soils or thick

sods (Bromfield, 1945, p. 178). He did, however, adopt "trashy" tillage practices whenever possible. The "trash" was weeds, crop residues, and other organic matter left on the surface of the soil, and both Bromfield and Faulkner realized that it was much better to mix this "trash" with the soil and leave some of it on the surface than to bury it deep underground by inverting the soil, which created a compressed layer of organic matter which acted like blotting paper and, rather than decomposing, hindered the movement of water from subsoil layers to plant roots.

Bromfield found that, "On the fields which had been trash-farmed the whole surface was covered by a mat of decaying vegetation mixed *with* the soil and this served to prevent evaporation and conserve moisture not only in the soil beneath but actually in the mulch itself. Wherever a tiny seed fell, there was moisture enough in the mulch to bring about germination" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 181). Unlike Faulkner, Bromfield did not believe that plowing in itself was bad, but rather the bare soil and lack of organic matter that resulted. Another detrimental effect from moldboard plowing was that a hardpan had developed in some of the fields on Malabar which had clay soils. This was remedied by using a subsoiler, which broke up the hardpan and allowed plant roots to penetrate and water to infiltrate (Bromfield, 1945, p. 140). After some experimentation with Faulkner's methods, Bromfield found that he obtained the best results by using deep, rough plowing, a process that he called "sheet composting":

> The process leaves soil and trash well mixed together to a depth of nine to ten inches, absorbs and holds moisture and in the process of disintegration produces stimulation to the bacteria, molds, fungi and worms which are so vital a part of any living, productive soil in which the mineral fertility is available to the plants. Actually the process converts and maintains our topsoil as a kind of perpetual compost heap in which we grow our crops. (Bromfield, 1948, pp. 142-143).

Soon Bromfield discovered that it was only the small amount of remaining topsoil on his eroded fields that was depleted in fertility. The subsoil, which at Malabar was predominately glacial till, was rich in plant nutrients. He discovered that alfalfa, with its deep root system, was "an impressive soil-restoring crop" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 191). He planted alfalfa with brome grass and red clover on areas with depleted topsoil and discovered that as soon as the alfalfa roots reached the rich topsoil, the plants grew strong and healthy. This eventually led Bromfield to the "heretical belief that we should have made more rapid progress in restoration if we had been able to scrape from the whole area of the farm the miserably depleted topsoil that remained and had gone directly to work on building new topsoil out of our minerally rich and well-balanced subsoil" (Bromfield, 1948, p. 143). When Bromfield dug a gravel pit on the farm to repair the roads, he discovered that the alfalfa roots had penetrated 12-14 feet into the gravelly subsoil which was much richer in minerals than the depleted topsoil (Bromfield 1948, p. 162).

Already in the 1940s there was great debate between "organic" farmers and chemical fertilizer advocates, with one side abhorring any use of chemical fertilizers and the other claiming that they were the only thing necessary for high yields. Bromfield, rather wisely, took the middle road on this issue. He felt that good nutrient cycling and return of organic matter to

the soils was very important, and that chemical fertilizers are only available to plants when there is sufficient organic material present. However, he also realized that mineral nutrients (except nitrogen) cannot come from thin air and that many years of extractive farming had depleted the nutrients in the topsoil at Malabar to such an extent that the missing elements had to be brought in from somewhere (Bromfield, 1948, p. 294). Bromfield pointed out that even animal manure might not provide adequate plant nutrients if the animals were raised on plants grown on depleted soils (Bromfield, 1948, p. 298). He concluded that, "Chemical fertilizer is valuable and available in exact ratio to the amount of organic material (in all stages of decay and assimilation) present in the soil, and we have found that the restoration of poor soils by the use alone of organic materials (either green or barnyard manures composted or uncomposted) grown upon these poor depleted soils is a process too slow, economically speaking, to be undertaken by any farmer who is not willing or able to undertake financial losses over a considerable period of years" (Bromfield, 1948, p. 304).

As the organic matter and fertility of the soils increased, crop yields at Malabar increased dramatically (Figure 22). The "Bailey hills," which had produced hardly anything before, went from 5 to 52 bushels per acre of wheat in four years, according to Bromfield; the "Fleming Place" went from 15 to 80 bushels of oats per acre, and the Ferguson Place produced 60 bushels of wheat per acre in 1947 (Bromfield, 1948, p. 151). It is likely that Bromfield exaggerated these figures as there is no actual record of how many bushels per acre were produced at Malabar, and Bromfield was known to be a bit of a showman and exaggerate in order to make a point. However, there undoubtedly was a significant increase in yields due to successful restoration efforts. In *Malabar Farm*, Bromfield explained why he believed that the soil had become productive once more:

> When we began searching for the reasons for all of these things, often with the aid of scientists far more informed and qualified than ourselves, we came inevitably in every case, even in that of the pastures, back to the same and simple conclusion—that these gains had been made by restoring to the eroded, worn-out fields devoid of organic material and of mineral balance, that eternally fundamental cycle of birth, growth, death, decay and rebirth. By doing so we had made highly available the chemical fertilizer we put on the soil, unlocked the thin residue of fertilizer left by our predecessor which until then had been largely unavailable and in the case of the Bailey hills and the high Ferguson Place we had undoubtedly unlocked great stores of *native fertility* which until the cycle was reestablished had long remained wholly locked and unavailable to all plant life. (Bromfield, 1948, p. 151).

Bromfield became incredibly excited about the soil restoration that was taking place at Malabar Farm. In 1945, he wrote his first farm book, *Pleasant Valley*, which launched the golden age of Malabar Farm. At the same time, Bromfield became increasingly involved in Friends of the Land, a soil conservation organization that was formed in 1940, just after Bromfield began restoring the soils at Malabar Farm. Since Friends of the Land plays a

prominent role in the history of both Malabar Farm and the soil conservation movement, it is worthwhile to look at the history of this organization—which is just as fascinating as the history of Malabar Farm itself.

Figure 21: View from Mount Jeez, c. 1945-1952. This hill was called "Poverty Knob" when Bromfield purchased Malabar; by the time this photo was taken, it is covered in lush grass and supporting a herd of grazing cattle (lower left). Photograph by Babson Bros. Photo Co., Chicago. Louis Bromfield Collection, Box 69, Folder 1496.

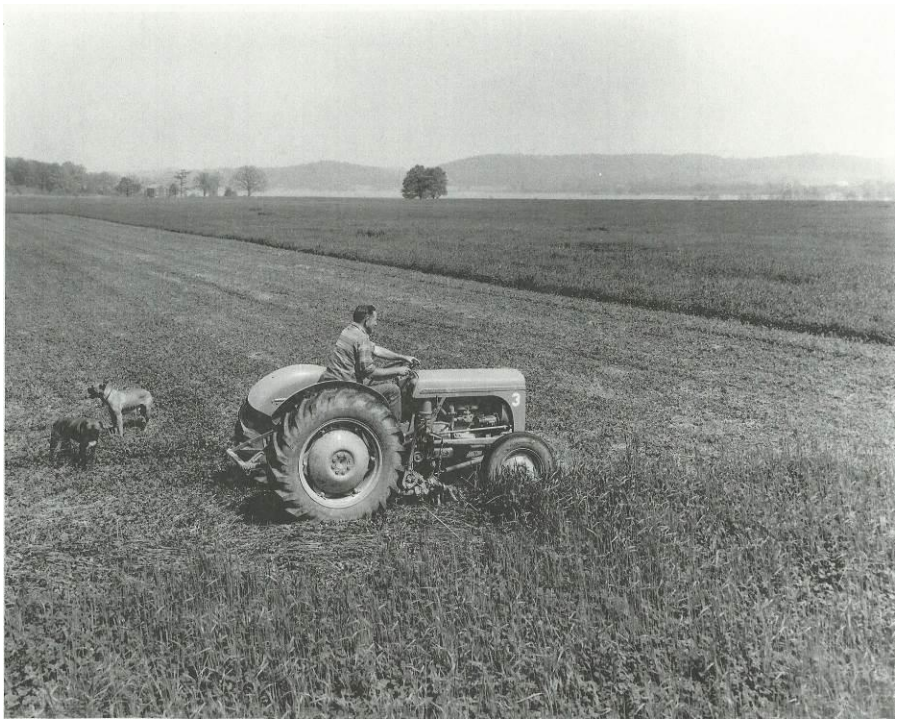


Figure 22: Louis Bromfield on a tractor in a lush Malabar field, c. 1945-1952. Photo by J. C. Allen and Son, West Fayette Indiana 55593. Louis Bromfield Collection Box 69, Folder 1495.

Friends of the Land

Louis Bromfield was not the only American concerned about soil conservation in the early 1940s. In fact, he was a latecomer to this movement. It had already been five years since Hugh Hammond Bennett had convinced Congress that soil erosion was a serious problem, and people all over the country were becoming concerned about soil conservation and joining together to do something about this serious issue. One of the most important soil conservation organizations that was formed during this time, at least in regards to Malabar Farm, was the Friends of the Land. Since the Friends of the Land played an important role in the history of Malabar Farm and quite likely in shaping Bromfield's farming philosophy, it is important to look at the history of this unique organization.

On March 22-23, 1940, a group of sixty men and women met at the Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C., to form a "Non-profit, non-partisan association for the conservation of soil, rain and man" (Friends, 1941, p. 11). The man who came up with the original idea for this organization was Dr. Charles E. Holzer of Gallipolis, Ohio; the other four signers of the original Manifesto were Morris Llewellyn Cooke from Pennsylvania, the first President of the organization; Charles W. Collier; Bryce C. Browning, also from Ohio; and Russell Lord from Maryland (Lord, 1947, p. 133). It seems that Louis Bromfield himself was not one of the founding members of Friends of the Land, nor were Ollie E. Fink and Dr. Jonathan Forman, M.D., two leaders of Friends of the Land who would play an important role in the history of Malabar Farm. Much later, in 1956, Friends of the Land wrote this about the inaugural meeting of their society:

> In March of 1940 a group of unselfish citizens came together in Washington. They were alarmed by the terrible waste of our natural resources—forestry experts, industrialists, conservationists, doctors, governmental officials, writers, bankers, professionals, farmers—citizens from all walks of life met to organize Friends of the Land. These founders of Friends of the Land resolved to educate the American people to the danger of our soil being washed away, our forests being cut down without replacement, our towns and farms being turned into desert. Before remedial measures can be made effective in a republic, the people must be informed—and so the purpose of this Society is to inform the public. (Friends, 1956).

Friends of the Land had extremely ambitious goals from its inception, which they published in a remarkable three-page document titled, "Manifesto", reproduced in its entirety in Appendix A. The Manifesto is divided into three parts. The first, titled, "Evidence of the Need," summarized the problems facing the land. These included soil erosion, loss of plant nutrients by erosion, degradation of water quality, and eventually human health problems stemming from poor nutrition. The second section is, "A Statement of Purpose": "We therefore now intend to organize and to bring quickly into action a non-profit association or society to support, increase and, to a greater degree, unify, all efforts for the conservation of soil, rain, and all the living

products, especially Man" (Friends, 1941, p. 12). The third and final section of the Manifesto is titled, "What We Can Do," and lays out an ambitious set of goals, which included assembling information about the need for conservation, encouraging soil conservation, including conservation information in educational curricula, and holding conservation conferences (Friends, 1941, pp. 12-13).

One of the most important parts of this plan was the publication of a magazine focused on conservation, to which they gave the simple title of *The Land*. This was edited by Russell Lord, of Maryland, who had quite specific ideas of what the magazine should and should not be. He did not want it to be rigid or to sound "as if one man had written or rewritten all the articles, and had rewritten them from previous issues. That is deadly. If I am sure of anything at all, I am sure that a live magazine ought to present a variety of voices saying various things in various ways and stirring up other people to say still more various things, intimately, personally" (Lord, 1941, p.22). Lord wanted this magazine to have a broad audience, to appeal to both city and country people, and to inform people about the soil in "plain English that is good writing because the people who write it are moved to the very depths of their being to sit down and say something on paper" (Lord, 1941, p. 23). He had bold dreams for this magazine, hoping that in time it would have as wide a readership as *National Geographic*.

From the very first issue, published in 1941, *The Land* was undoubtedly a unique periodical. It was published quarterly in thick 6 ½" x 10" issues of 100-150 pages each and was illustrated with woodcut drawings by Kate Lord and photographs. The content was quite diverse, ranging from stenographic transcripts of meetings, travel journals, and articles by soil scientists to fiction, poetry, and tongue-in-cheek articles. It had opinions and it had facts, but every article in some way emphasized conservation and why it was so critically important.

In addition to publishing *The Land*, Friends of the Land also held conferences and conducted soil conservation tours. Their very first Summer Meeting and Field Outing was held in Ohio in July 1941. This meeting began in Columbus, Ohio, with a series of lectures on Friday, July 18 (Lord, 1941, p. 227). On Saturday they drove to northeast Ohio from Columbus and made their first stop in Knox County at the farm of Cosmos Blubaugh (Lord, 1941, p. 228). Blubaugh was a pioneer in soil conservation who had begun restoring his land before Louis Bromfield even returned to Ohio. He had purchased a 140-acre farm in 1924 and slowly built it back up to fertility by implementing soil restoration practices such as incorporation of organic matter and contour planting (Bromfield, 1945 May). In 1945, in an article for *Reader's Digest*, Bromfield described the Blubaugh Farm in this way:

> For my money it is the most beautiful farm in America. You see it best from the top of the hill where the whole farm lies spread out in an amphitheatre [sic] of plenty, with the contoured fields in semi-circular strips dyed various greens—forest on the crest, then a strip of orchard, then rows of black raspberries, and alternating strips of light green corn and emerald-green alfalfa. At the bottom of the bowl, in a grove of black walnut trees, sit the neat white houses, the big barn, the apple storage house and the corn dryer. The big spring pond, blue as the

> brilliant Ohio sky above it, full of bass and bluegills, spreads its beauty in the very dooryard and near it grass fed cattle and hogs. Children play under the trees; neighbors and friends from nearby villages work in the fields and orchards. All around is a country of abandoned or run-down farms, houses and barns fallen, the fields a wilderness of weeds. Underbrush and forest seedlings are reclaiming the once rich land. This country is the victim of bad and greedy farming. In the midst of it the Blubaugh place is like a jewel in a tarnished setting. (Bromfield, 1945 May).

After visiting Blubaugh's farm and talking to him about conservation, the Friends of the Land continued on to Malabar Farm, Louis Bromfield's conservation showplace in Richland County. Bromfield had only been practicing conservation practices at Malabar Farm for three years (Bromfield, 1945, p. 277), but had already made significant progress in restoring worn-out farmland back to productivity. In *Pleasant Valley*, Bromfield gives a vivid description of this first visit to Malabar by the Friends of the Land. He had catered a lunch for a hundred and fifty people, but many more than that had already arrived before the official procession came from Columbus. The caterer had to rush into Mansfield "to bring back more hams, more shrimps, more chicken, more ice cream, more forks and knives and spoons" to feed the rapidly increasing crowd, which when counted turned out to be 504 people (Bromfield, 1945, p. 278).

The Friends of the Land stayed at Malabar until midafternoon, after which time some people returned to Columbus but about thirty cars continued on the tour to lakes in the Muskingum Conservancy and the State Experiment Station at Wooster. They ate dinner at a CCC camp near the Coshocton Hydrologic Station where, although it was getting dark, they were able to see some of the scientific instruments used to measure how much rain infiltrated into the soil (Lord, 1941, p. 232). On Sunday, they traveled to southeast Ohio and saw the scars in the land caused by strip mining, as well as reforestation efforts and restored areas in the Hocking Valley. They concluded the trip with dinner at another CCC camp near Murray City and a speech by Dr. J. A. Hall, director of the Central States Forest Experiment Station, about forest management and restoration.

So successful was this first trip of Friends of the Land that they eventually made the trip to the Muskingum Conservancy and Malabar Farm an annual tradition. They always visited Malabar Farm, some of the dams and reservoirs of the Muskingum Conservancy, the Cosmos Blubaugh Farm, and the Coshocton Hydrological Station. In 1956 they added other destinations, including the museum at Zoar, a former communal settlement, and the John Stotzer Farm (Friends, 1956). An article in the *Ohio Farm Bureau News* from 1957 describes one of these Muskingum Conservancy tours from the point of view of a 16-year-old high school senior from Columbus, Ohio, named Don Dreher. Dreher was sponsored by the Farm Bureau Federation to go on this trip and in return wrote an article for their magazine describing the experience:

> I had never spent much time on a farm and little time considering the conservation problem. This trip, however, impressed on me one main fact, which is that we have to start now and try to conserve the soil and water which were before

> needlessly wasted…Included in the meeting was a tour of the Muskingum Conservancy District...First we visited Malabar Farm. This was the home of the late Louis Bromfield. Bromfield spent a great deal of money in trying to develop better forms of farming and conservation practices…This is a very good illustration of how scientific farming paid off. You would say, "Sure, but look at all the money the man spent on developing the farm." This is a good theory. The theory is smashed, however, because of our next stop on the tour at C.D. Blubaugh farm. Mr. Blubaugh...went to the agricultural experts at Ohio State University to get advice. Much to the scorn of his neighbors, he tried the advice given him. He put wagon loads of humus, corncobs, cut grass, anything that would add to the fertility of the soil, on his land…He gained respect of his neighbors and soon was widely known for his farm. Today he is one of the world's leading farmers in his field…Where do the ideas come from, I asked myself? This was answered very quickly during our next stop at the Coshocton Hydrologic Station…The thing that impressed me most was the lycimeter [sic]. This is a scale which has a 65-ton section of the earth on it. The section is completely isolated from the other ground by concrete. There are plants on this section and the lycimeter [sic] measures the water used. It also catches the water which seeps down through the ground…All in all, scientific farming seems to me the answer to our conservation problems…More farmers should try it and we will have a better future for our coming generations. (Dreher, 1957).

The Friends of the Land toured more than just Ohio, however. In 1942 they traveled to the Tennessee Valley Authority, where they were invited by James Pope, a TVA director (Pope, 1942, p. 221). They were very impressed with the dams, factories, and model villages created by the TVA and had an overwhelmingly positive impression of the trip. Russell Lord describes the heavy security at the hydroelectric power plants and dams because of the war, and also mentions the reactions of Bromfield and Dan A. Wallace to the racism still prevalent in the South at this time:

> We drove from there to see Norris Dam and its powerhouse. You don't get into that powerhouse now unless they're entirely sure you wouldn't want to wreck it. Even then, taut guards with gats handy keep right at your shoulder when you approach those miraculous whirling giants, the dynamos. Ours was the first party of visitors that had been admitted beyond even the outside barricade for months…Then we were taken inside the powerhouse, that beautiful concrete temple reared by Southern energy and brains, in large part, to advance modern progress. There, in the reception hall, severely modern in architecture, were two separate sanitary drinking fountains with placards plainly stating that one was for WHITE and the other one was for COLORED… "Come on Dan, you old abolitionist!" cried Bromfield to Wallace. They strode up and drank out of the COLORED fountain. No one was shot. (Lord, 1942, pp. 234-235).

A much less humorous episode from this trip is a description, also by Russell Lord, of how one of the TVA model communities, known as Wheat Community, was evacuated so that

the military could use it "as a practice field for demolition by air-bombers" (Lord, 1942, p. 233). Eighty-one families had lived in this community, which had been established five years earlier as part of the TVA. Mrs. W. E. Gallaher, one of the residents of Wheat Community, described how they had established a community center, library, two churches, and a fair. They had restored their pastures and had 542 cattle, 231 sheep, and 320 hogs (Lord, 1942, p. 233). They had learned to can the produce of their ground and had cellars full of canned foods. She said, "Of course it was a shock to learn after we have worked all these years and planned for the future that we have to move. But the Government does things for the good of the people and the spirit of the people will be that if the Government has to do this it must be necessary" (Lord, 1942, p. 234). Russell Lord ends this short section with a quote from County Agent Ezell:

> County Agent Ezell rose up to speak. "There isn't anything else to do. These people themselves wouldn't stand for any protest or appeal. These people have shown a good spirit about having to move out. One farmer, I heard, was very resentful. He said to his neighbors: 'I'll stay here. Let them come and get me if they want me.' His neighbor said: 'You might be right. But we might put a big cross mark on your house and tell them when they fly over to use it for a special target.' 'I believe I'll move,' this fellow said. 'I believe so too,' said his neighbor. Another old farmer said to me: 'Ezell, my wife can't move fast or far but I'll take her by the hand and start down the road.'' (Lord, 1942, p. 234).

Perhaps the most ambitious trip ever taken by Friends of the Land was the Soil Conservation Tour of Texas in November 1947, sponsored by Houston's Second National Bank (Figure 23). This began with the seventh annual meeting of Friends of the Land, held in Houston on November 7-9, after which 167 members of Friends of the Land boarded the "Soil Conservation Special" 17-car train and embarked on a week-long, 2000 mile tour of both good and bad farming in Texas (Tipton, 1947) (Figure 24). The week of November 9-15 was even declared "Soil Conservation Week" by Texas Governor Beauford Jester (Tipton, 1947). The keynote speaker on this trip was Louis Bromfield, who gave at least one lecture per day during the trip but refused any form of payment and insisted on paying his own travel and meal expenses (Tipton, 1947). The account of this Texas trip in *The Land* was started off with an article by George Hawkins, Bromfield's secretary and business manager, about the Bromfield family's eventful journey to Houston. They were supposed to take a private plane owned by Sears-Roebuck, but it had a mechanical malfunction, and so they went on a commercial flight to Chicago instead. In Chicago they got on a larger airplane to go to Houston. Hawkins described the trip as follows:

> For the first fifteen minutes after the big ship took off all was calm and quiet. The clouds were beautiful and they tell me we shot up to thirty thousand feet while travelling about three hundred miles an hour. We were supposed to get to Dallas in three hours. The 'Seat-belt: No Smoking' light went out and everyone relaxed. The Hostess appeared in the doorway and smilingly said, 'Please fasten your seat-

> belts. We are anticipating a slight turbulence.' She had just gotten the words out of her mouth when all hell broke loose. The plane dropped about two thousand feet, turned upside down and inside out. The little hostess was thrown back into the forward part of the ship and we never saw her again…Seven hours later we were still in the same storm and still bouncing around just as riotiously. The Host came in and said, "Get ready! He's going to put her down here." There wasn't much we could do about getting ready, having already been for seven hours strapped in. Well, he put her down and I will have to admit, he did it with the greatest of ease…It was about 10:30 p.m. and pouring rain…We were at Longview, Texas, halfway between Dallas and Houston. We then learned that the storm had put out our compass and radio and that for four hours the Captain and co-pilot had very little idea where we had been…In the empty lobby of the Rice Hotel, Houston at seven that morning (Friday, Nov. 7) Mr. B. loudly proclaimed that no pioneer had ever had such a trip and that from then on he was travelling in a covered wagon. (Hawkins, 1947, p. 414).

Once Bromfield and the others finally arrived in Houston, the rest of the trip on the private train was much more pleasant. The weekend of November 7-9 was the Seventh Annual Meeting of Friends of the Land, featuring such notable speakers as Paul Bestor, national President of Friends of the Land, and Dr. Hugh H. Bennett, chief of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (Figure 25). Friday and Saturday were spent in lectures at the Rice Hotel and "Sunday the 9th was a light day, with informal tours of the city or out to nearby ranches morning and afternoon, and a mammoth barbecue at Houston's gigantic municipal coliseum to top the meeting off…a crowd of six hundred tucked away spaciously on a couple of acres of floor-space, with rimming service-tables, livestock exhibits, a marvelous cowboy band, and an entertainment platform on which robust 4-H youngsters sang, gave forth rebel yells, and exhibited Brahman bulls that could gracefully jump a barrel five feet in diameter from a standing start. (Lord, 1947, p. 420)."

After this, a total of 167 members of Friends of the Land boarded the Second National & Burlington's Soil Conservation Special 17-car private train for a 2000-mile journey across Texas (Figures 26-27). At each stop they had bus or car tours to see both good and bad examples of farming in Corsicana, Forth Worth, Amarillo, Lubbock, Iowa Park, Wichita Falls, and Abilene (Lord, 1947, p. 422) (Figure 28). Near Lubbock, they saw good farming practices with contour farming and "trash-culture tillage, [which] holds that nearly-virgin soil more nearly where it belongs, intact (Lord, 1947, p. 422). In contrast, near Corsicana they saw a huge gully thirty feet deep. In the Dalworth Soil Conservation District, near Forth Worth, they saw terracing and range restoration with native grasses "on the ranch of Dr. Charles H. Harris. Dr. Harris has followed sensible grazing and mowing measures to restore the original native big and little bluestems, sideoats grama and Indian grasses. These grasses are good providers of high-quality forage; and their root systems are deep and vigorous…Dr. Harris harvests half his grass for forage and leaves the other half as a protective mulch cover. This stops erosion, increases the waterholding capacity of the soil, stores up plantfood, and stirs up bacterial activity to keep that

soil alive" (Lord, 1947, p. 424). Near Amarillo a farmer demonstrated the new well he had drilled to provide irrigation water for his fields, which was only thirty feet deep and able to irrigate 200 acres of land (Lord, 1947, p. 427).

After several more stops, tours of many farms and communities, and lectures by Bromfield every night, the tour ended at Fort Worth where everyone returned home. This tour was the most ambitious event ever undertaken by Friends of the Land, when the organization was at its strongest and had the most recognition in the popular media. In fact, the period from 1947-1952 would be the zenith not only of Friends of the Land, but of Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm as well. The conservation movement had grown during World War II despite travel restrictions and rationing of many important products, including paper for publications. Once these restrictions were lifted in 1946 or early 1947, both Louis Bromfield and Friends of the Land were finally able to do everything they had dreamed about during the war years but had been unable to put into practice. As the economy began to recover from the war and people could travel again, Malabar Farm received an even greater influx of visitors than ever before, ushering in the golden age of Malabar.

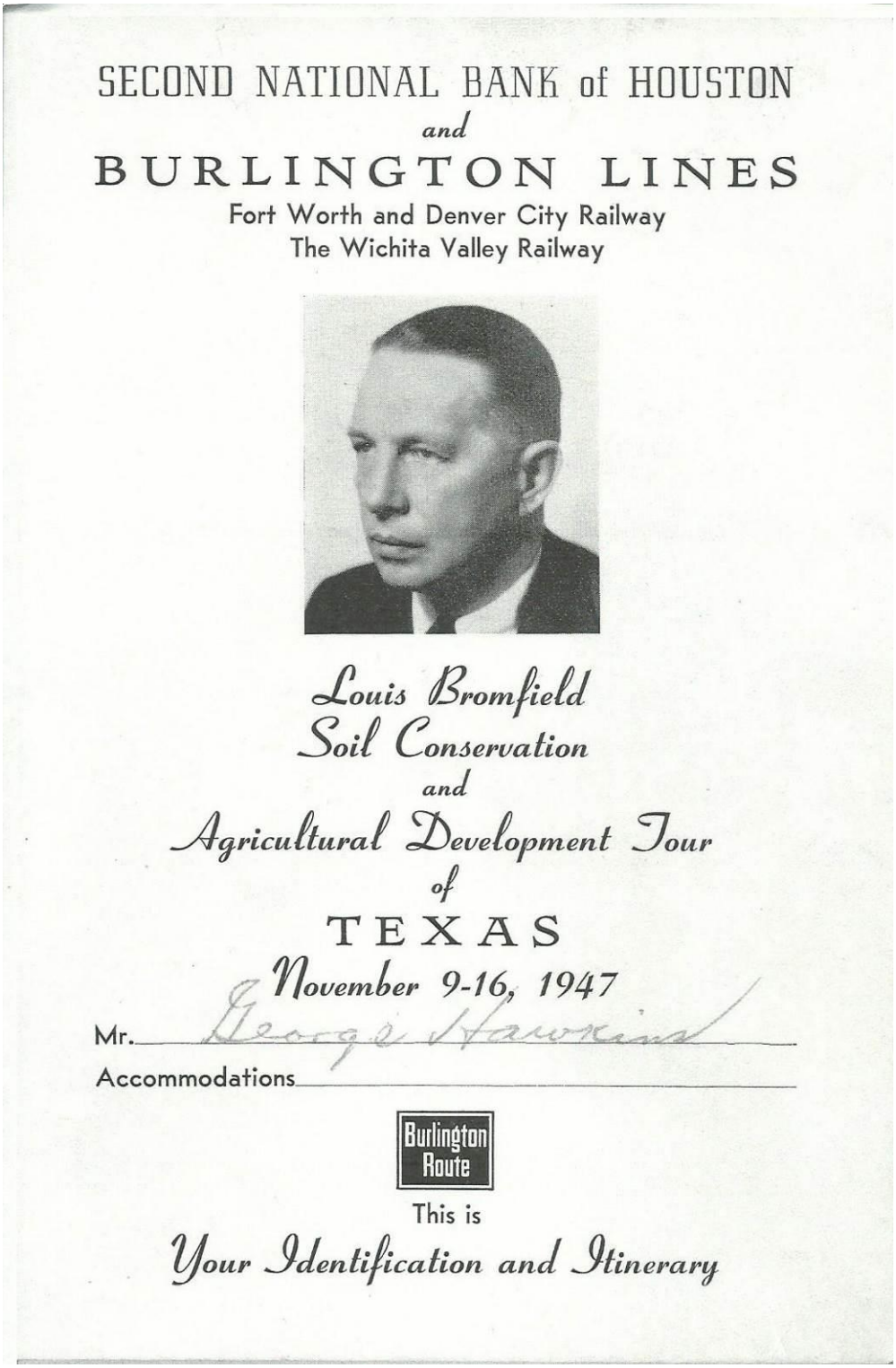


Figure 23: Brochure from the Texas Soil Conservation Tour; this one was issued to George Hawkins, Bromfield's secretary. Box 141, Folder 2285. Louis Bromfield Collection, SPEC.RARE.CMS.95, The Ohio State University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.

Figure 24: The Texas Soil Conservation Special. Photograph by Bob Riley, Wichita Falls, Texas 805A Brook. Box 71, Folder 1504, Louis Bromfield Collection, SPEC.RARE.CMS.95, The Ohio State University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.

Figure 25: "Bennett on Second Frontier Day." Tom Kennard (left), Louis Bromfield (center), and Hugh H. Bennett (right). From *The Land 6*(4), p. 419.

Figure 26: "November 9: Leaving Houston for a week up across Texas" on the Soil Conservation Special. From *The Land 6*(4), p. 413.

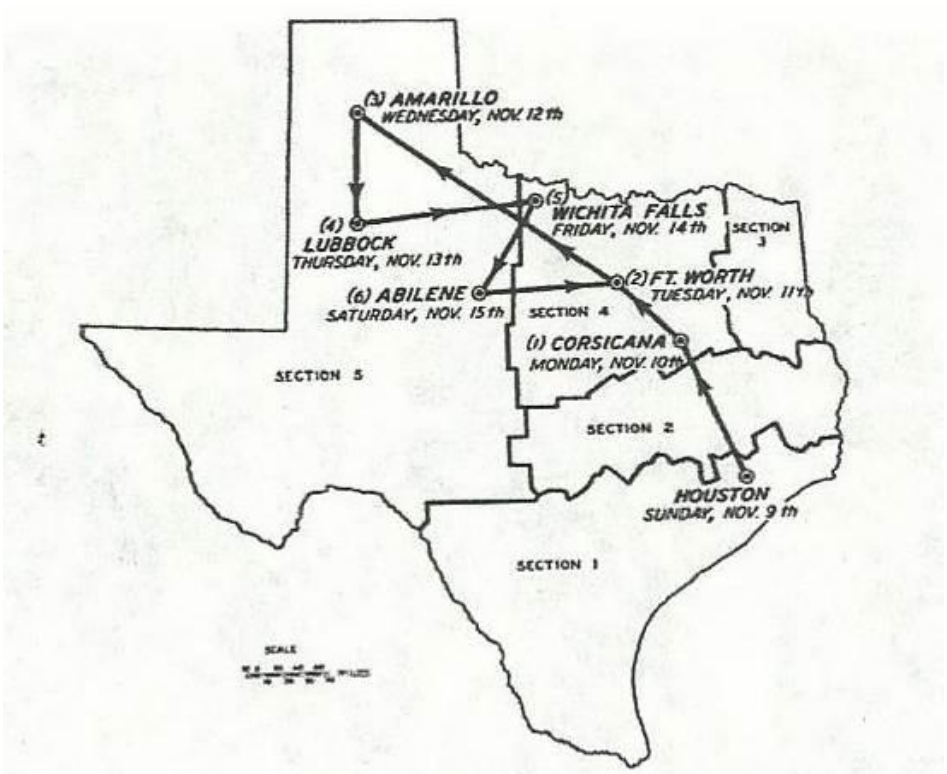


Figure 27: Map of the Texas Soil Conservation Tour route, beginning in Houston and ending in Fort Worth. From *The Land* 6(4), p. 420.

Figure 28: "Fort Worth: Big Business goes to the grass roots." Tour members visit a farm near Fort Worth; note the buses in the background that brought them from the train. From *The Land* 6(4), p. 423.

The Golden Age of Malabar: 1946-1955

> According to Holy Writ, Moses smote the rock and the water gushed forth. Little less miraculous is what Bromfield has done at Malabar. Water flows again copiously from long-dead springs, reactivated when barren hills were once more verdure crowned and grand with soil and deep-rooting legumes which capture and retain rain water as it flows…Bromfield has done far better than making two blades of grass grow where one grew before. He has taken an arid waste of gullied and worn-out soil and made it to blossom as the rose. The name of Louis Bromfield will shine with increasing luster with the years and he will go down in history, not only as a literary genius but the one who contributed the most in our time to the vital cause of conservation in all its phases. ("Bromfield—And Malabar Farm", 1949)

Louis Bromfield was already a famous author before he established Malabar Farm, and by the time he published *Pleasant Valley* in 1945, he had also achieved astounding results in soil restoration. Tourists, sightseers, reporters, conservationists, farmers, and "cranks" from all over the world came to see Malabar, which eventually became known as "The most famous farm in the world." The quote above is only one of the glowing accounts written by those who visited Malabar. One reporter for the Denison Herald, after visiting Malabar, wrote, "Malabar Farm, Ohio—Louis Bromfield's 'Pleasant Valley' is all and more than he pictures it in his popular book by the same name. Surprising to those who may glorify Malabar from afar after reading a book which tells a good story, it is a FARM!" ("'Pleasant Valley' is a real farm"). One of the largest events that Bromfield ever hosted at Malabar was the Successful Farming Field Day at Malabar Farm, on August 9, 1952, sponsored by *Successful Farming* magazine (Figures 29-31). This program was advertised in *Successful Farming* with this glowing description:

> August 9—come see for yourself! Louis Bromfield will personally describe the methods used to bring the fields of Malabar to lush productiveness. Sponsored by Mr. Bromfield and the editors of *Successful Farming*, the event will get under way at 1:30 p.m. (*Eastern Standard Time*). Bring a picnic lunch if you come early. At Malabar Farm you'll see an actual renovation demonstration using the methods described in this article, and there will also be tours of the farm. A soils specialist from Ohio State University will also be on hand. To get there, go to Lucas, Ohio, where signs will direct you to Malabar Farm. We'll see you on August 9! (Bromfield, 1952, August, p. 3).

Bromfield later wrote in *From My Experience* that over 8,000 families came to this field day, causing traffic back-ups in the town of Lucas and buying every bit of food in all the surrounding towns (Bromfield, 1955, p. 42). In addition to special events like this, Bromfield conducted tours every Sunday afternoon from May to October, attracting over 20,000 visitors every year (Bromfield, 1955, pp. 41-42). Visits to Malabar were made much more interesting than just a study of soils and crops by Bromfield's unique personality; the Bromfield family which included Mrs. Bromfield (Mary), the three daughters (Anne, Hope, and Ellen), and George

Hawkins, Bromfield's secretary who was really a part of the family; and the animals at Malabar who were "characters" in themselves, including the faithful Boxer dogs who accompanied Bromfield wherever he went. Malabar was by no means an ordinary farm and apparently a visit there was quite an experience (Figures 32-37). Bromfield described in this way the multitude of visitors that came to Malabar:

> Not the least of the satisfactions has come from the visitors, the thousands of people, mostly dirt or city farmers or scientists who come on Sundays from late April to well into November. They come in shiny cars, in jalopies, in motor buses—from two hundred to a thousand each Sunday throughout the summer…There have been Farm Bureau groups, Granges, 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America, Soil Conservation District Association, G.I. Vocational classes, City Farmers Clubs, many of them coming by bus from as far as Flint and Saginaw in Michigan and Buffalo in New York State…In long processions on foot or in cars they follow the long winding lane to the top of the Bailey Hill which Phillippe, one of the boys, long ago named "Mount Jeez."…Up there on the hilltop with the whole of Malabar laid out like a map below, the talk goes on for an hour, two hours, sometimes three…Sometimes Sunday is a long, hard day but always it is a rewarding and satisfactory one. (Bromfield, 1948, pp. 45-46).

One reporter for *Farm and Dairy* magazine in 1946 described his visit to Malabar Farm, which began with a greeting from a gobbling turkey when he rang the doorbell. He was given a Jeep tour of the farm by Bromfield accompanied by several of the Boxer dogs (even though Bromfield told them they couldn't come) and then invited to have lunch with the Bromfield family and a visiting young Frenchman with a Brooklyn accent. One subject of conversation at the meal was the topic of football: "The other Frenchman had seen a football game the day before for the first time in his life. It looked, he said, a little silly, and he mentioned some of the things that looked odd. Then Mrs. Bromfield said she found a football game one of the most boring things in the world, and Looie said something in a similar vein, and I, in my turn, admitted I had only seen one game in the past 15 years. It wasn't a sports-inded [sic] crowd" (Groves, 1946). The tour of Malabar also included the dairy farm and the garden, where he saw second-growth cabbages that weighed 4 pounds each.

Although many of the visitors to Malabar were from Ohio, individuals and groups came from other states and even other countries to see what Bromfield was accomplishing at Malabar. Howard Lytle, Teacher of Vocational Agriculture at Arthur Hill High School in Saginaw, Michigan, wrote a several-page description of a bus trip that the Saginaw F.F.A. and some local farmers took to Malabar Farm (reproduced in full in Appendix B). When they first arrived, Bromfield was busy loading hay for silage, so they looked at the dairy herd in the barn until Bromfield arrived and led the bus with his Jeep for a tour of the farm. They saw springs, ponds, pastures, and a cave on the Ferguson Farm where Bromfield hoped to age cheese. They also took both photographs and motion pictures of the farm and left "with the satisfied feeling that Mr. Bromfield's advance statements were true and that we had met one of America's great

men….Bus trips were planned for 1948 to Traverse City, but none can ever overshadow the hospitality and educational value from Malabar, Mr. Bromfield, and his three Boxers" (Lytle, c. 1947). Bromfield told this group that they had traveled farther than any other farmers' class to visit Malabar, at least up to that time, which was probably 1947 based on the reference to planning trips for 1948, presumably the following year.

After World War II was over, rationing and price ceilings were lifted, the economy began to return to normal, and the self-sufficient aspect of Malabar was gradually abandoned. In the chapter "The Passing of a Pattern" in *Malabar Farm* (1948), Bromfield explained why Malabar was becoming primarily a "grass farm" rather than what he termed a "general farm," the old-time American model of a farm that produced many different products for sale and could not produce anything efficiently in the age of mechanization and specialization. The scale at which Bromfield was attempting to operate Malabar as a "general farm" was too large to be easily managed manually and too small to be efficiently mechanized. He had originally tried to operate a 200 tree apple orchard and an egg operation with 1400 pullets in addition to sheep, row crops, hogs, and both dairy and beef cattle (Bromfield, 1948, pp. 49-51). During the war when there were food shortages this worked, but after the war it proved unmanageable and Malabar became a specialized grass farm with livestock, predominately dairy cattle. The vegetable gardens were maintained for the use of the families living on the farm because Bromfield felt that the homegrown vegetables were much higher quality than any they could purchase (Bromfield, 1948, p. 50).

In 1950, Bromfield published his most extensive agricultural book, called *Out of the Earth*. Unlike *Pleasant Valley* and *Malabar Farm*, both of which are a mixture of semi-technical farming chapters and humorous stories about life at Malabar, this book is focused strictly on the agricultural practices and incorporates stories only to demonstrate the theories that Bromfield describes in detail. There is much overlap between this book and the others, but it is a good description both of Bromfield's farming philosophies and agricultural practices. By 1950, when Bromfield published *Out of the Earth*, the restoration of Malabar Farm was complete. Bromfield had achieved great success in soil restoration and Malabar had become an efficient dairy farm as well as an attraction for conservation-minded tourists from both near and far.

Yet Bromfield was not the sort of man who could just sit back and enjoy the success he had made of Malabar. He became restless and wanted to move on and establish other Malabar Farms in other parts of the country and even the world. The first of these was the Texas Malabar near Wichita Falls, Texas (Figures 38-39). Bromfield was quoted in the *Wichita Daily Times* in 1949 as saying, "Our Ohio Malabar has now been developed to the extent that it no longer offers any real conservation or production problems. It is a profitable producing farm; all wind and water erosion has been checked. It no longer challenges our agricultural resourcefulness. Bob [Huge] and I were just beginning to realize this fact when you folks in Wichita Falls made this very generous offer" (Shelton, 1949). Bob Huge, the farm manager who had replaced Max Drake at Malabar, moved down to Texas to operate this farm, which was planned to include a dairy and truck crops, especially asparagus ("Famed novelist", 1949). By April of 1950, several

structures had already been erected, including a modern dairy barn, "two modern dwellings, a tool shed and milking parlor" ("Malabar Farm fast becoming Texas show spot", 1950). After a short burst of initial excitement from 1949-1950, however, Bromfield was silent about the Texas Malabar, most likely because it was a failure.

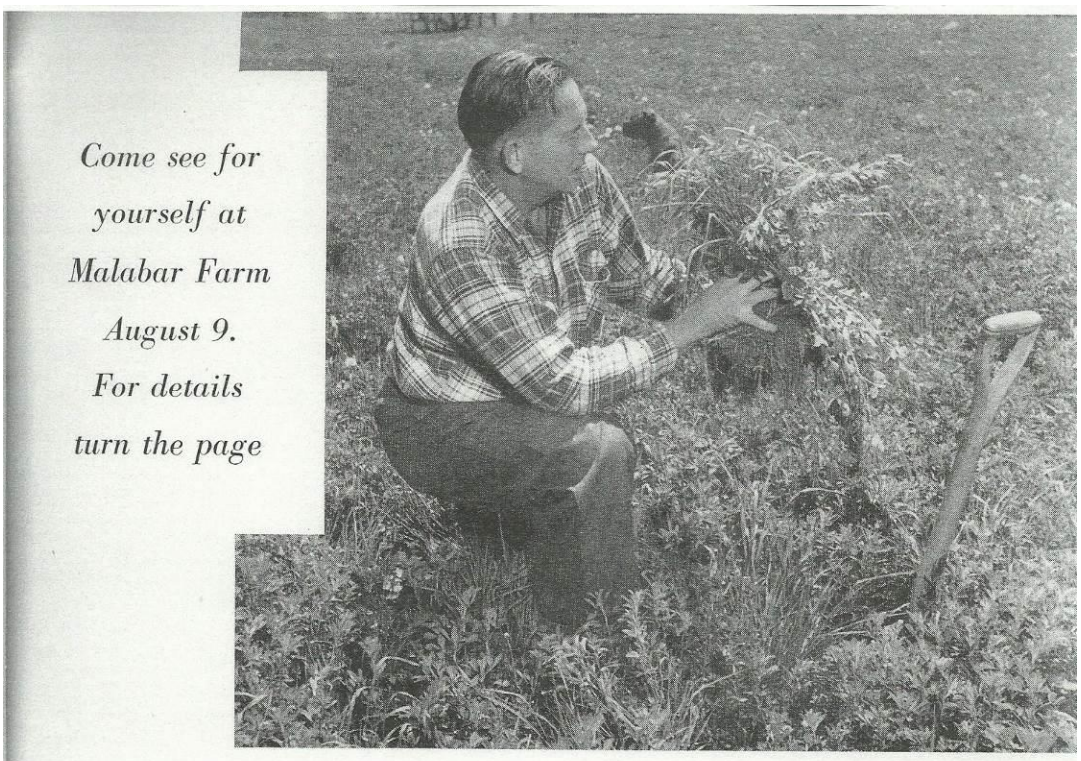
Back in Ohio, although Malabar Farm remained primarily a dairy, Bromfield began to rethink the idea of complete specialization. Although he never returned to the "general farm" model which he wrote so negatively against in *Malabar Farm*, Malabar had more diverse agriculture in 1955 than in 1948. Bromfield mentions establishing at least a small hog operation again in *From My Experience*. The greatest addition to Malabar during the 1950s, however, was the resumption of vegetable market gardening and the establishment of "The Roadside Market to End All Roadside Markets," which is described in one of the last chapters in *From My Experience* (Bromfield, 1955, pp. 271-282).

The vegetable fields were established across the street from the old Schrack house in response to a huge demand from customers for organically grown vegetables. "When the visitors asked questions, they found that no inorganic dusts and sprays and no arsenical ones were ever used and that the amount of vegetable poisons used, when necessary, had declined to less than 5 percent of the dusts and sprays that had been needed twelve years earlier" (Bromfield, 1955, pp. 271-272). Bromfield also wanted to grow "old-fashioned," unique, flavorful varieties of vegetables rather than varieties bred only for shipping. He felt that, "While many of the plant breeders have made excellent contributions, commercially speaking, to the whole field of vegetable and fruit production by creating new varieties that will ship or freeze well or lie around for days without actually rotting, they have done little toward improving quality and flavor" (Bromfield, 1955, p. 279). The Malabar roadside market sold old-fashioned cantaloupe varieties, okra, unique varieties of tomatoes, watercress, celeriac, potatoes, and other vegetables as well.

Even more unique than the varieties of vegetables sold at this roadside market was the market itself. Next to the old stone Schrack house, on the side of a hill, was a famous spring, one of the largest in Ohio, flowing out of the sandstone cliff with clear, cold water into an old springhouse with hand-hewn sandstone troughs. Below this springhouse, just off Pleasant Valley Road, Bromfield constructed a vegetable stand, built out of sandstone from the hillside. Cold, fresh water from the spring was piped into large troughs in this market building, where the vegetables were kept cool and crisp when placed in the constantly flowing water: "In a short space of time, the vegetables left in the cold water of the old stone troughs seemed to change. The wilt from the hot sun on the salads gave way to an icy crispness. The cucumbers were quickly chilled through and the sun-ripened melons achieved a coldness that no refrigerator would possibly produce. The Pascal celery became so crisp that if dropped to the floor it shattered like glass. This was not the *dead* cold of the refrigerator but the living cold of the spring water, gushing out of the primeval rock" (Bromfield, 1955, p. 215). Later, Bromfield also had a storehouse for vegetables constructed on the other side of the road, also fed with spring water to keep the vegetables cool and crisp.

Bromfield also became excited about establishing another Malabar Farm in Brazil, called Malabar-do-Brasil. He wrote extensively about this in *From My Experience*, devoting two long chapters to the subject. The idea was to do the same thing he had done in Ohio in Brazil, where poor agriculture had also caused rapid degradation of agricultural land. With the financial backing of Brazilian businessmen, a farm was actually set up. Against Bromfield's wishes, his youngest daughter, Ellen, and her husband, Carson, were the couple selected to manage the farm. Bromfield felt that they were too young and inexperienced to handle it, but they were actually able to make it a success and eventually purchased their own fazenda in Brazil where they settled down and raised their family (Geld, 1962, p. 187, 200-201).

Louis Bromfield had accomplished much at Malabar Farm. He had restored worn-out soils that the neighbors said could not be restored. He had made friends with some of the leading agriculturalists and conservationists of the time and had followed their advice. Perhaps most importantly, by publishing his four farm books, he had made the public more aware of the issues of soil and water conservation and the problems with American agriculture than any other single man had done. Yet even as Malabar reached its golden age of popularity and progress in soil conservation, the man who had created it began to struggle with financial difficulties, family disputes, health problems, and grief. The golden age of Malabar would soon end, before many of Bromfield's followers even knew what had happened.



Come see for yourself at Malabar Farm August 9. For details turn the page

How I get organic matter—quick!

By Louis Bromfield

I have heard a great truth uttered many times—that it takes Nature 10,000 years to build an inch of topsoil. But I have rarely heard it said that *man could build 10 inches of topsoil in 10 years* (and profit while doing it) by the *same* process which Nature employs!

It took Nature a long time to build an inch of topsoil, because she followed, of necessity, the painfully slow process of laying down one leaf or one blade of grass at a time. The good farmer has a huge variety of heavy legumes and grasses—which may be used as cover crops, green manure, and profitable heavy pasture, and turned into the subsoil. Topsoil is nothing more than subsoil thoroughly mixed with decayed and decaying organic material, plus the benevolent acids, the bacteria, and the spongelike moisture-holding qualities of humus. All these make for quickly available fertility, high yields, healthy plants, animals, and people.

If the subsoil contains a good balance of minerals, the topsoil, built by man, will be one of the richest and most productive on earth. If the mineral balance isn't all it should be, we now have means of testing the soil, discovering deficiencies, and correcting them.

Figure 29: Advertisement for the "Successful Farming Day" at Malabar. Box 131, Folder 2127. Louis Bromfield Collection, SPEC.RARE.CMS.95, The Ohio State University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.

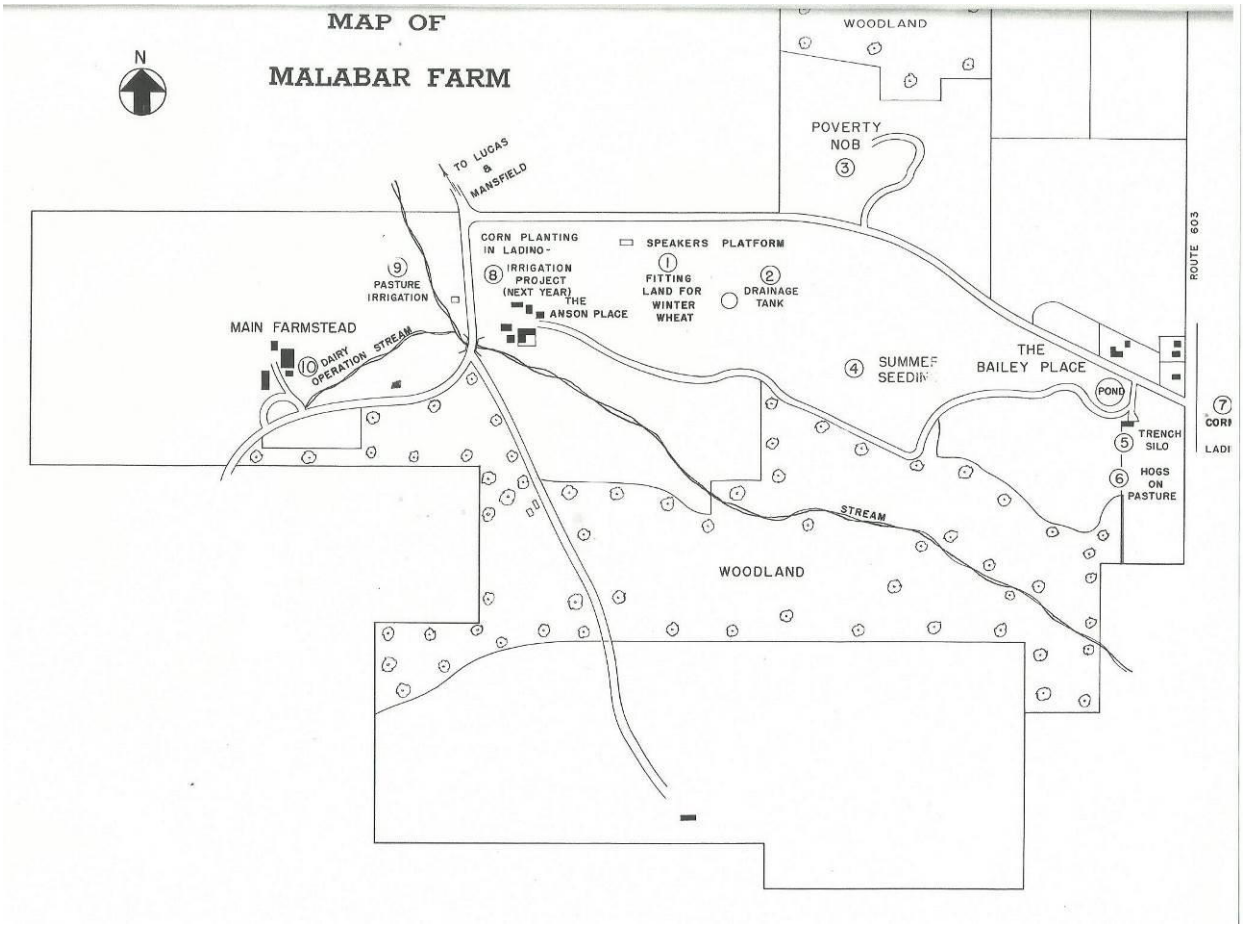


Figure 30: Map of Malabar Farm, 1952, showing location of events for the "Successful Farming Day." Box 131, Folder 2127. Louis Bromfield Collection.

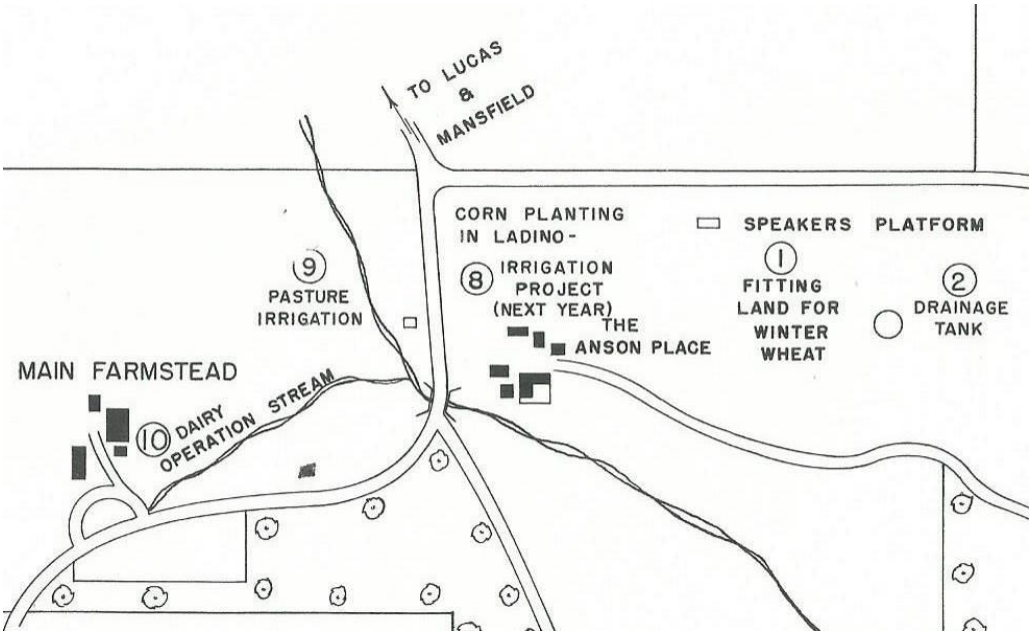


Figure 31: Enlargement of detail on map, showing several points of interest.

Figure 32: Bromfield with Boxer dogs and cattle, at Malabar Farm. Photograph by Bob Wilson, 140 Chittenden Ave. Columbus, Ohio. Box 69, Folder 1494. Louis Bromfield Collection.

Figure 33: A procession of cars visits Malabar Farm. Box 70, Folder 1498. Louis Bromfield Collection.

Figure 34: Bromfield (center) speaks to group on Malabar hillside. Ferguson Negative 1741. Box 70, Folder 1500. Louis Bromfield Collection.

Figure 35: Bromfield (left) kneels to touch soil. Box 70, Folder 1498. Louis Bromfield Collection.

Figure 36: Bromfield often began his tours on the lawn in front of the Big House. Box 70, Folder 1498, Louis Bromfield Collection.

Figure 37: Both men and women came to visit Malabar. Babson Bros. Photo Company, Chicago. Box 70, Folder 1498, Louis Bromfield Collection.

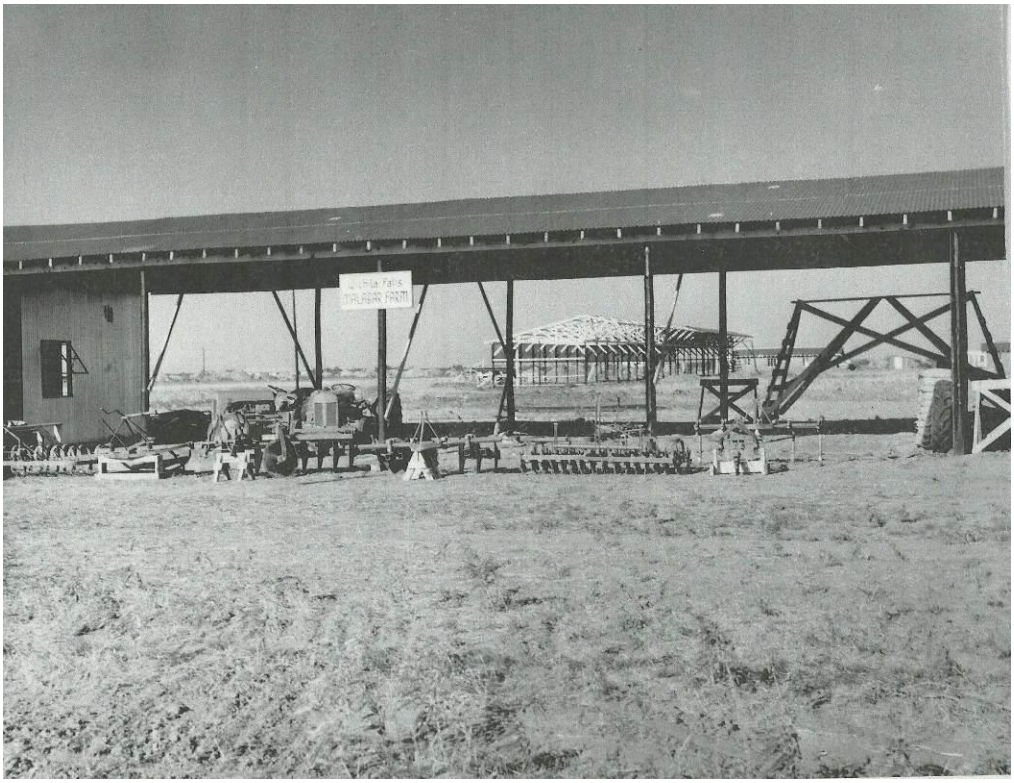


Figure 38: Construction at the Wichita Falls, Texas Malabar, June 29, 1949. Ferguson Negative 1865. Box 71, Folder 1504, Louis Bromfield Collection.

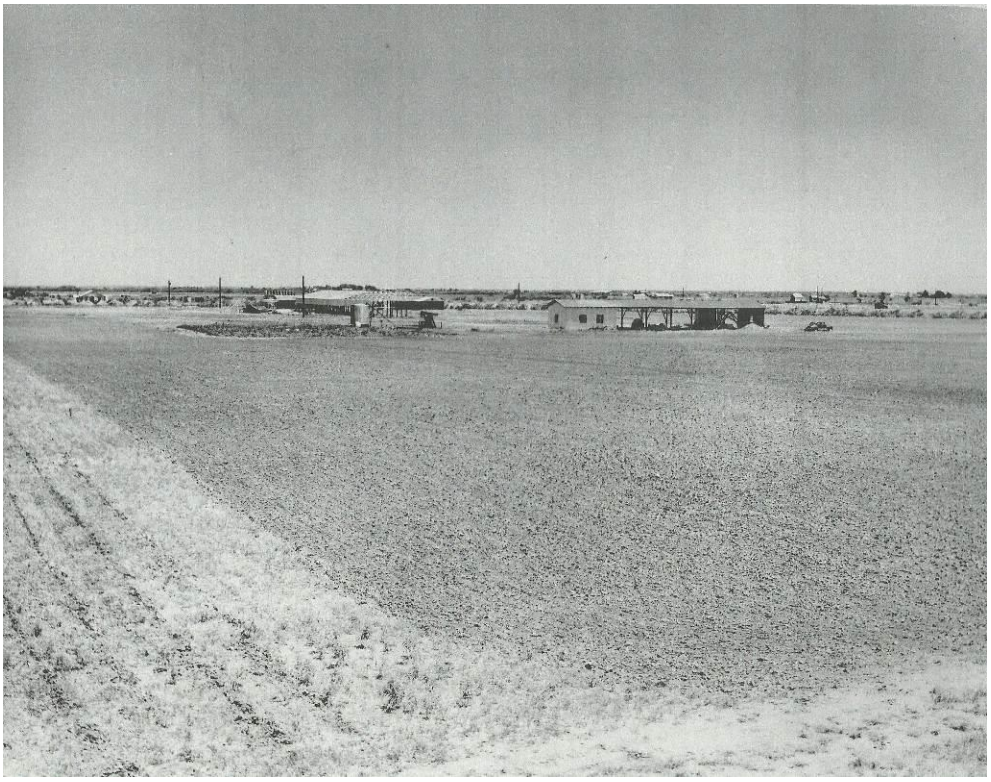


Figure 39: Another view of the Texas Malabar, June 29, 1949. Ferguson Negative 1866. Box 71, Folder 1504, Louis Bromfield Collection.

Sadness Comes to Malabar: The Death of Louis Bromfield

> We were young and new and naïve in farming and none of us were financial geniuses. But I can't help feeling even now that, had he put his trust in us, had we all worked together, our farms and Malabar would have accomplished the continuation and permanence he had envisioned with such eagerness at the beginning and he would not, at the end of his life, have been such a lonely and defeated man…We had too many ideas and, good or bad, they didn't suit him. In the back of his mind I believe the thought ran that there was not really room at Malabar for ideas that were not his own. The thing was too precious to him, too much an expression of himself, to risk its sharing. Indeed, in his heart of hearts, he could not have borne to share it with anyone else. (Geld, 1962, p. 173).

Even as Malabar Farm became world-famous as a conservation showplace, sadness came into Louis Bromfield's life. His good friend, editor and secretary, George Hawkins, died on April 9, 1948 of a heart attack. Bromfield never quite recovered from the loss of Hawkins and his writing after this point, although still in his unique style, is more disorganized and repetitive than when it was edited by Hawkins. Later, Louis Lamoreux, recalling Bromfield's relationship with Hawkins, said that, "The relationship between Louis and George was very close, and not often understood in Mansfield. Their very work made such a relationship necessary…Well do I recall the many heated and profane discussions they had about plots, other writers, publishers, characters on and off stage. They literally talked one another down, and were most outspoken and profane, yet Louis always listened, and never do I recall an instance in which George was cut off" ("Lonesome", 1972).

In 1952, Louis Bromfield also lost his wife, Mary Bromfield, who was found dead in her bed, where she had been sitting reading, the morning of September 14 ("Heart attack", 1952). Mary Bromfield had come from an upper-class New England family where tradition and etiquette reigned supreme and was a very different sort of person than Louis Bromfield. Her one desire in life was to be a good hostess and to be submissive to her husband, yet the lifestyle at Malabar Farm did not require a hostess. Ellen Bromfield Geld, their youngest daughter, wrote later in her book *The Heritage* about her mother's relationship with her father:

> But in marrying him my mother had totally conceded her life to him to do with as he pleased. When she discovered that he intended to do nothing, then the long, growing loneliness began. She was not strong enough, not capable really of making her own life…How lost she must have felt in our midst. For what was there in that busy, purposeful Ohio life that others could not do better than she? (Geld, 1962, pp. 98-99).

Mary Bromfield did not fit in with the rest of the family and their unorganized, noisy, and sometimes profane lifestyle, yet she suffered in silence. George Hawkins called her "Mary the Martyr" (Geld, 1962, p. 101). Although she did little in the operation of Malabar Farm, her very presence contributed a sense of peace or calm to her room and wherever she was present (Geld,

1962, p. 100). Even if it had seemed like Mary Bromfield was not an important figure in the Bromfield household, her death left a hole in the family which, along with the gap left by the death of Hawkins, was never filled. Louis Bromfield missed his wife greatly; when he finished his roadside vegetable stand in 1952, he dedicated it, "To the memory of Mary Appleton Bromfield, who also loved this valley and found here peace, happiness and abundance" (Plaque still remaining on the vegetable stand at Malabar). Mary's death marked the end of the golden age of Malabar and the beginning of the end for Louis Bromfield. It was not quite the end; Bromfield continued to research conservation at Malabar for three more years and published one last farm book in 1955, called *From My Experience*. But those who knew him well said that he was not the same. In a 1972 newspaper interview, Louis Lamoreux said this about Bromfield:

> In his later years, Bromfield would lose, overnight, interest in a subject which had just a brief time before engaged his attention, and he would not talk about that subject. "One did not even think of asking 'why?' for Louis was not well then. The best of his too few years were behind him; crops in the form of his writing had failed; he became bitter, more withdrawn within himself, and those who were close to him well knew why," Lamoreux said. "He had always, when funds provided, lived in a lavish, though not selfish, manner, and the loss of income through his unproductive writing had begun to take its toll. While during his productive years he was the avatar of patience," Lamoreux continued, "He was now irritable; mounting troubles, financial as well as health, were on his mind, and he just would not commit himself to anything other than the very routine." Lamoreux said it "isn't easy to even think about the Big House or Mr. B without being almost maudlin, for in reality, the story as well as the man at that time was a symbol of sadness." ("Lonesome", 1972)

Bromfield never published a highly successful novel after Hawkins died, and eventually began to struggle financially. It was not so much that he did not have enough money to live on, but that he had a very lavish lifestyle which included giving unlimited free food and alcoholic beverages to hundreds of guests at Malabar each year. His friends Jim and Georgia Pugh, who lived in a cabin near Malabar Farm, remembered after his death that "For 17 years the lights were never turned off or the bars closed (at Malabar Farm). Cars went to the railway station and airport around the clock to pick up more. The reason Bromfield passed away without funds—although he owned the property—was that he wined and dined the money away. It was like a hotel. He just liked people" ("Bromfield, friends," 1974). Bromfield was one of the few fortunate people who made a significant amount of money writing, and he had difficulty adapting to a reduced income as his books waned in popularity.

There were family struggles at Malabar as well, especially between Louis and his daughters. Although Bromfield had often talked about how he wanted the farm to be something permanent that he could pass down to his descendants, in reality he could not bring himself to let go of even part of it. His daughters Hope and Ellen grew up, married, and wanted to settle down and raise their families at Malabar. But Bromfield could not let go. He felt that his daughters

were immature and he had no respect for their husbands. In the end, he would not trust the operation of Malabar to anyone else, even his own daughters, despite the fact that his financial situation was becoming worse every year and his health was breaking down. His daughter Ellen wrote later, in her book *The Heritage*, that this impasse between father and daughters was what eventually caused her to leave for the farm in Brazil rather than staying in Pleasant Valley:

> It was obvious that the Boss, as long as he could walk, talk, think and act in his noisy, expansive way, could never share his valley. Whatever the price of remaining alone and independent, he would gladly pay it. Then, too, perhaps the brilliant light he had cast over that valley gave his children little room in which to cast lights of their own. It was almost as if by some unspoken mutual consent we owned that it was time to go. (Geld, 1962, pp. 173, 183)

Though none but his closest friends knew it until the very end, Bromfield was a sick man. According to his daughter Ellen, he had an "obscure kind of cancer of the bone marrow," which was incurable (Geld, 1962, p. 194). Louis Lamoreux said that during his last sickness Bromfield became increasingly irritable: "A change had come over Louis. He was just not the same. While outwardly he manifested the same interest and vigor, there was something stiff and lacking about him. He was less patient, more abrupt and discontented. He never openly expressed dissatisfaction with his manner of living, or of his surroundings, but he no longer seemed contented in the Big House" (Lamoreux, 1957). Lamoreux said that Bromfield had discussed plans to build a small cabin on the side of Mount Jeez where he could live rather than in the Big House, but he did not have the money and this "hide out" was never constructed.

Shortly before Bromfield's death, he finally became reconciled to his daughter Ellen when he visited her in Brazil. They were finally able to establish a new relationship as friends rather than the friction they had as father and daughter (Geld, 1962, p. 189). There was a certain room at Malabar-do-Brasil where Bromfield stayed while he was with Ellen and which he called simply, "The White Room." The last chapter in *From My Experience*, which is one of the last things that Louis Bromfield wrote, describes his philosophy that he developed in this room, which revolved around the central idea of "Reverence for Life." Near the end of this chapter, Bromfield wrote:

> And so in this book when I have been writing about plants, animals, and people, I now know why, and I know why my own life, which has been a singularly fortunate one, has grown richer and more satisfactory as instinctively and unconsciously I have moved toward a Reverence for Life. This principle is known to every *good* farmer, as it is known to every truly good and truly happy person…In no other field of activity can the whole principle of the Reverence for Life, which may indeed constitute the very basis of the preservation of our civilization, be so thoroughly, easily, and profoundly understood and exercised as in the field of agriculture, for, as I have pointed out many times in this book, it is the only profession in which man deals constantly with *all* the laws of the universe and life. (Bromfield, 1955, p. 305).

Louis Bromfield's health deteriorated rapidly. He spent several months at hospitals and at the estate of Doris Duke, a tobacco heiress who was also interested in conservation. He died on March 18, 1956 in the Columbus Hospital, at 59 years of age (Geld, 1962, p. 195; "The dream", 1972). To pay his hospital bills, "the ultimately indebted author sold his forests to wood-cutters, an act he, himself, believed one of the greatest sins against life—the ravaging of a forest" ("The dream," 1972). Bromfield's body was cremated and his ashes buried in the small cemetery at Malabar Farm where the pioneer Schrack family was buried, along with Mary Bromfield. Ellen felt that Malabar Farm was not the same without Louis Bromfield. When she visited the farm a year after his death, she saw Rex, one of the Boxers, waiting for Bromfield to return: "He did not rush toward us with his usual exuberance, but simply sat and watched our approach, without curiosity. It was a stance I had often seen the dogs take when they knew somehow…that my father would be gone a long time…The dog was waiting and I realized that, in that hot July afternoon, suspended in stillness, the whole farm seemed to be waiting" (Geld, 1962, p. 198).

It was the end of Malabar's Golden Age. Without Louis Bromfield, Malabar would never be the same as it had been during his lifetime. Yet it was not the end of Malabar Farm, nor of the conservation work that had begun there. In fact, the next chapter of the history of Malabar would be tied very closely to a conservation organization that Bromfield had been heavily involved in and which had been around almost as long as Malabar itself: The Friends of the Land.

Malabar is Saved: The Friends of the Land Purchase Malabar

> As could well be imagined, the sale of Malabar Farm attracted nearly every variety of the human race. Land speculators would have made of it a "Malabar Village" of split-level houses. Crackpots would have turned it into a retreat for "writers and artists." In the end it was saved from those two unbecoming fates by the Friends of the Land, a group of businessmen and conservationists who, together with the Noble Foundation of Tulsa, Oklahoma, turned it into the Louis Bromfield Ecological Center. (Geld, 1962, p. 205).

After the death of Louis Bromfield, Malabar Farm went up for sale (Figure 40). None of the three Bromfield daughters wanted to take over the farm. When asked about it by a newspaper reporter, Ellen said that, "The lawyers, naturally, wanted to get as much money for the place as they could so there would be a trust fund for Anne, and of course, with three of us having an interest in it, I don't think it would have been the right thing for us" (Mattox, 1957). There was no shortage of prospective buyers for the farm because it was so famous, as Ellen Geld pointed out in the quote above. Ollie Fink, the secretary of Friends of the Land, said that, "A Cleveland group is trying to buy the land for 'a sort of country club,' while a Mansfield real estate firm wants to carve it up for housing" ("Sale of Malabar", 1957). The State of Ohio was even considering purchasing Malabar and "might continue its use as an experimental farm. It might also use it as a site for a proposed eastern Ohio State university" (Parks, 1957).

Friends of the Land, however, had other plans for Malabar. Although the organization, now in its seventeenth year, was beginning to decline in numbers and effectiveness, they were still just as passionate about conservation as they had been back at that first meeting in 1940. They remembered that Louis Bromfield himself, back in 1952, had dreamed of an "Ecological Center" in northeast Ohio. In a 1956 article in *Land & Water*, the Friends of the Land magazine, they quoted what Bromfield had written about such a center:

> "I see it as a center which accumulated and coordinated all information in the field of man's relation to his environment, whether it was on nutrition, flood control or what you will. I see it as being established in an area which was in itself a laboratory. A center which evolved research projects which could be carried out in the laboratories of the Battelle and Rockefeller Institutes, or in the colleges and universities, a center which maintained contact with a program in all fields, whether it be economics, nutrition, wildlife, recreation, flood control or what you will…Someday this country and the world will be forced to wake up and undertake some ecologic pattern which emphasizes all of the interlocking factors. When this is done, there will be an immense conservation of money, energy and what you will; and infinitely more solid advances toward feeding the world, bettering the general lot of mankind and establishing a full foundation for world peace." ("In Appreciation", 1956).

According to the *Land & Water* article, the quote from Bromfield was prepared as a proposal to the Ford Foundation in 1952 as a suggestion for an ecological center supported by that association. The material for this proposal seems to have originated in two undated letters written by Louis Bromfield to Friends of the Land, the manuscripts of which are in the Friends of the Land records at the Ohio History Society Archives in Columbus, Ohio. These two letters are reproduced in Appendix C and are very similar to what is quoted in the *Land & Water* article but not verbatim. Most of the material was drawn from the letter that Louis Bromfield wrote to some of the leaders of Friends of the Land, including Paul B. Sears, Ed Condon, and Chester C. Davis, about the future of Friends of the Land. The plans for the ecological center were the third stage of the direction that Bromfield felt that Friends of the Land should take. Bromfield felt that, "It seems to me that the battle for soil conservation to which all of us have given so much energy, time and money, has been won, and we are left with no issue" (Bromfield, c. 1952a). First, he thought that Friends of the Land should broaden their base to include all areas of "Man's Relation to His Environment," or ecology. Secondly, he thought that they should do more practical work with farmers and have less focus on ideals. Thirdly, he thought that this proposed ecological center would "tie it all together" (Bromfield, c. 1952a). This was what Friends of the Land quoted from to show that they felt that Louis Bromfield would approve very much of having an ecological center at Malabar. However, a second, undated letter from Louis Bromfield, addressed to Dr. Jonathan Forman, seems to indicate that Bromfield himself did not consider Friends of the Land capable of operating an ecological center. Bromfield wrote that:

> Such a proposal as you suggest could never be set up and made to function without the prestige and the financial backing of something like the Rockefeller or Ford Foundations and should not be attempted on any other basis…I frankly do not feel that FOL has the financial backing at present or has ever had it to accomplish anything so comprehensive. What the FOL accomplished was never done by government backing or by money, God knows, but by the individual effort and prestige of all of us. I don't see any younger men coming on to take our place and without younger men we are headed exactly nowhere. I have no objection whatever to such a center being set up as a Friends of the Land project, but I do not think we are big enough nor do any of us have any longer the time or the energy to push it ahead on our own. I have a continued and perpetual interest in all the fields we have discussed, but I don't think that anyone of us or indeed most of the old war-horses still remaining can cope with a project of the size I suggest. It needs the prominent backing and prestige of a big foundation. (Bromfield, c. 1952b).

No mention of this warning is made in any of the Friends of the Land promotional material for the purchase of Malabar Farm. It seems from the information given about the Ford Foundation in the *Land & Water* article that Bromfield hoped that such a center would be established by a large, prestigious foundation, and that Friends of the Land could not do it alone. Friends of the Land seems to have ignored this warning, however; they appear to have believed

that their cause was so good that they would not only be able to raise the $140,000 necessary to purchase Malabar Farm, but also enough money to support this ecological center, which would be named the "Louis Bromfield Institute." Another 1956 *Land & Water* article, titled "Plans for Malabar," laid out impressive goals for this Ecological Center:

> In order to continue the great contribution to the science of agriculture and to further encourage the conservation ideals for which he stood, it is proposed to establish the LOUIS BROMFIELD INSTITUTE. Malabar Farm would be established as a living memorial to his personal handiwork and pioneering efforts in restoring it from waste land to rich and fertile acres to the end that a permanent and sound agriculture may be established throughout the world.
>
> **Objectives:** To integrate in a living landscape the sciences of agriculture and ecology in a practical educational program.
>
> To collect, correlate, interpret and disseminate reliable information on the relationships between man and his environment to farmers and agriculture leaders.
>
> To operate Malabar Farm as a practical example of dynamic agriculture guided by the best available knowledge as gained by demonstration and in field and laboratory research.
>
> To encourage pilot farm projects throughout the world…
>
> There is a great need for such a center. In most universities and colleges there are one or two scientists interested in the impact of environment upon the particular discipline but there is no central integrating institution. It is proposed, therefore, that an Ecological Institute would be set up at Malabar under the control of a Board of Trustees composed of leaders of unquestioned ability, ecologists and men of business experience. The members of this Board of Trustees should be familiar with what has been attempted at Malabar and the spirit in which it was undertaken. ("Plans for Malabar", 1956).

In this plan, Malabar Farm would continue to be operated as a working, profitable farm. It would also be an agricultural research center to do research that could not be done at most university experiment stations. An Ecologic Center would be established to collect all available information about ecology in a central library. Education would be an integral part of this Center, and symposia would be held on all areas related to conservation, agriculture, and ecology. Farming practices would be demonstrated to all scientists and conservationists, and fellowships would be offered to foreign exchange students to study agriculture. A whole list of potential research topics was listed, including nutrient absorption by plant roots, simpler and more accurate methods of soil testing, increasing yield while maintaining optimal quality, plant growth and maturity, watershed management, and much more. Workshops and field demonstrations would be held which would also include other area conservation attractions, including the Coshocton Hydrologic Laboratory, the Ohio Agriculture Experiment Station at Wooster, and the Muskingum Conservancy District. It would be a summer laboratory for school teachers in Ecology. An ecological library would be established with staff who could find the information a researcher needed for a specific problem. It was a plan that would rival programs

at most universities. It was extensive and bold. What remained to be seen was if the Friends of the Land, already in its decline, could actually raise the funds to establish and operate such a center.

The first step, of course, was to buy Malabar Farm, and that is where the initial fundraising was focused (Figure 41). Friends of the Land received $30,000 from the Doris Duke Foundation and $1,000 from actor James Cagney ("Society receives $30,000", 1957), although this money does not seem to have been used to purchase Malabar. Friends of the Land managed to get a $55,000 one-year loan from local Mansfield businessmen, including Ralph Cobey, James H. Hoffman, Charles E. Nail, Avery C. Hand and William J. Locke ("Friends of the Land", 1957). They needed $140,000 to purchase Malabar, and the final $85,000 was obtained on loan from the Noble Foundation of Ardmore, Oklahoma, apparently just in the nick of time. Inez Robb, in a newspaper article from May 15, 1957, described the purchase of Malabar Farm by Friends of the Land as follows:

> Indeed, the purchase by the Friends culminated a tense climax in a race against time that would have done credit to any of the novels of the man who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1926 for "Early Autumn." Within a few hours of the sale of Malabar to a real estate group that proposed to sell the big house and cut the 700 acres into small farms and a housing development, the Friends of the Land received through the mail a loan from the Samuel R. Noble Foundation of Ardmore, Okla. This loan from the Noble Foundation, plus a second loan from a group of Louie's old friends and admirers in Mansfield, plus a substantial gift from Doris Duke, enabled the Friends to buy Malabar and save it from a fate worse than death in the eyes of innumerable persons who loved both Louis and the farm. (Robb, 1957).

Friends of the Land agreed to buy Malabar in May of 1957 and received official title to Malabar Farm on July 24, 1957 (Cobey, 1958). Malabar Farm was saved from development not a moment too soon. According to Friends of the Land, "Actually 30 minutes later and the place would have become a new Suburbia and only a memory in agriculture" ("Malabar has been saved!", 1957). The period of uncertainty about what would happen to Malabar after the death of Louis Bromfield seemed to be over. The future was bright for the Louis Bromfield Institute to become the world's premier research and education facility for ecology and conservation. There was just one problem, one thing that would come back to haunt Malabar for years to come. All the money that was used to buy the farm was loaned to Friends of the Land by businessmen. They respected Louis Bromfield as a person and admired the work Friends of the Land wanted to accomplish at Malabar. However, above all, they were businessmen—and they expected to get their money back. The question would be whether Friends of the Land could repay the loan or not.

Figure 40: The cover of a real estate brochure announcing that Malabar Farm was for sale. Box 139, Folder 2256, Louis Bromfield Collection.

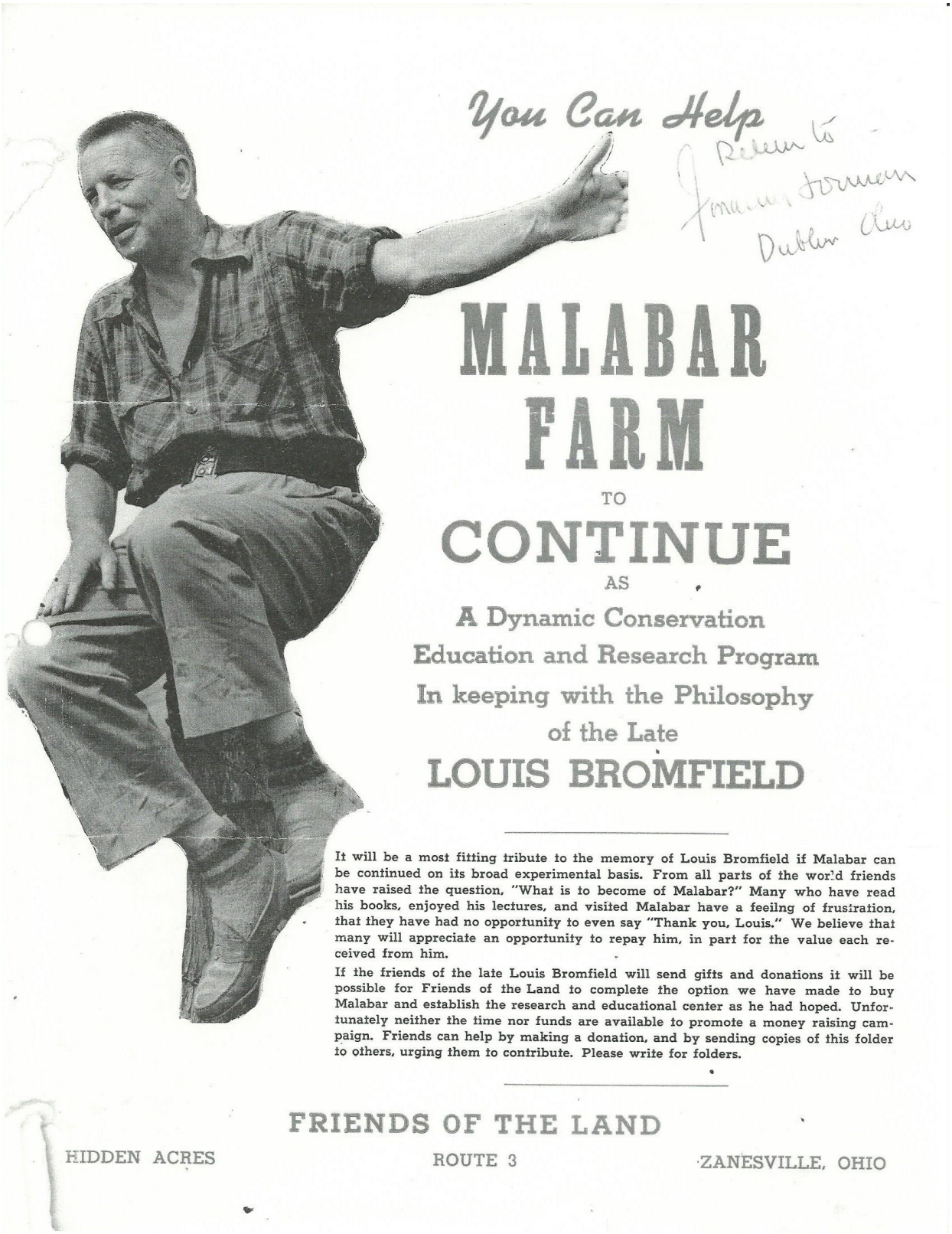


Figure 41: Friends of the Land flyer asking for donations to help them purchase Malabar. Box 138, Folder 2252, Louis Bromfield Collection.

Bright Hopes for Malabar: Friends of the Land Operate Malabar, 1957-1958

One of the first acts of Friends of the Land upon purchasing Malabar Farm in May 1957 was to stop the logging of the Malabar forests. Apparently Louis Bromfield, shortly before he died, had sold the timber rights to 52 acres of the Malabar Woods for $10,000 to the Hinchcliff Lumber Company of Strongsville, Ohio ("Friends buy back timber", 1957). Bromfield had signed the contract in 1955 while he was in New York for medical treatment and it included all trees above 12 inches in diameter ("Lumbering operations halted", 1957). Many of these trees were part of a research program in cooperation with the Ohio Forestry Division, with certain marked trees which were measured for growth each year ("Malabar Farm Trustees", 1957). As soon as Friends of the Land purchased Malabar Farm, they had a meeting of the Malabar Farm Trustees and chartered a plane for Ralph Cobey and Ollie Fink to fly to Strongsville and meet with the lumber company executives ("Lumbering operations halted, 1957). After some discussion, they came to a settlement and Friends of the Land bought back the timber rights for $11,500—fifteen hundred dollars more than Bromfield had received for the timber in the first place, even though 15 acres had already been logged ("Friends buy back timber", 1957). The money to buy back the timber was donated by millionairess Doris Duke, and a portion of the Malabar Woods was named the "Doris Duke Woods" in her honor (Besch, 1958). It is not clear whether this was a separate donation from the $30,000 already donated by Doris Duke or not.

With the time-sensitive issue of the logging resolved, Friends of the Land began on their grand plan to turn Malabar Farm into the Louis Bromfield Institute. Late in 1957, they formed a "Committee of 100 to assist the Board of Directors of Friends of the Land to establish THE LOUIS BROMFIELD INSTITUTE with its Ecologic Center and Malabar Farm" ("The Committee of 100", 1957). This committee was headed by Louis B. Seltzer, editor of the Cleveland Press and a good friend of Louis Bromfield. Apparently the real purpose of this Committee of 100 was not necessarily to make plans or guide the work being done at Malabar, but to show the support of famous, influential figures to help the fundraising campaign. This is made clear in the sample letter that Seltzer wrote to send to potential committee members, which is addressed to the actor James Cagney:

> Dear Mr. Cagney: The purpose of this letter is to invite you to join with a group of friends of the late Louis Bromfield to continue and expand the conservation education and research work at Malabar Farm. Louis Bromfield made Malabar the most famous farm in the world. We plan to continue the dynamic conservation education and research program in keeping with the Bromfield philosophy and ideals…When Louis Bromfield was still alive he numbered among his friends many of the most famous and substantial leaders in the nation. These were in all fields of endeavor, in business, in finance, in government, in agriculture, in the professions especially in the entertainment field. A special committee of 100 members or more is being selected from these friends to join with the Directors of Friends of the Land in promoting the Louis Bromfield Institute and its educational and research program. We hope you will accept our

> invitation to be a member of this national committee in this undertaking which we believe can make this a most important contribution to the future strength and welfare of this nation. Research in the management of our soils and water is surely equally as important as research in the guided missile field…We realize how busy you are, but hasten to assure you that lending your name to this committee will not obligate your time, but rather an endorsement which will strengthen our appeal for funds to finance the program. (Seltzer, 1957)

This fundraising campaign was time-sensitive because the $55,000 loan from the Mansfield businessmen was only for one year from the date in July 1957 when Friends of the Land paid the purchase price for Malabar Farm. The whole amount would be due at the end of July, 1958, and if it were not paid back the farm would be up for sale again. Confident that they could raise plenty of money in time, Friends of the Land hired Robert L. Beda for a nationwide fundraising campaign, with all expenses to be paid by Friends of the Land plus a salary of $1000 per month to Beda (Agreement, 1957). Apparently Friends of the Land intended to raise $800,000 with this fundraising campaign ("Malabar sale", 1957). This fundraising campaign included a brochure titled "The Louis Bromfield Institute at Malabar Farm, Lucas, Ohio, serving Agriculture, Science, Industry, Humanity." This brochure summarized the plans of Friends of the Land for establishing this Institute and called for funds to make it a reality (Figure 42).

An intended part of this fundraising campaign was to put an article by Paul B. Sears describing the Institute and calling for funds in as many influential, popular magazines as possible. This article was rejected by most of the popular magazines, including Harper's, Life, Time, Reader's Digest, and Fortune. The publishers gave different reasons for rejecting the article. Some cited lack of general appeal; others had a general policy not to publish fundraising articles for any organization. In the same folder as these rejection slips in the Friends of the Land papers is an undated, unsigned article titled "Suggested Copy for Harpers and other magazines." If this is indeed the article that was sent to the publishers, it is understandable why they rejected it. Although grammatically and scientifically correct, the article comes across as rather cold and impersonal and lacks the passion so evident in many of the earlier Friends of the Land promotional materials. However, it is more likely that the article in question was the 7-page document titled, "What About Malabar?", written by Paul B. Sears. This article, although perhaps a little long for a magazine piece, is well-written and entertaining and worth a read; it is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix D. It is divided into three sections, beginning with some stories about Malabar during Bromfield's day, followed by a summary of the need for agricultural research to be conducted without government funding, and concluding with a call for funds to turn Malabar into such a research and educational center.

Apparently another part of this fundraising campaign was to make an agreement with Harper & Brothers Publishing Company to do some sort of fundraising campaign with book customers. The details of this campaign were not located, but the representative from the publishing company, Cass Canfield, did reply to Ollie Fink and ask, "Before presenting the appeal to our Board of Directors, I would appreciate you informing me what would happen if

you raised a set amount of money but not sufficient for the purchase of the land and the setting up of the Foundation. In that event, would you refund the donors to the extent of what they had put up?" (Canfield, 1957). Fink's reply to the letter may not have been satisfactory to Canfield as it does not appear that this fundraising idea ever materialized. At least in this letter, Fink is so confident that the money will be raised that he does not consider any other possible outcome:

> Dear Mr. Canfield…
> This matter will probably not be answered officially until our Board Meeting, September 13-14-15. I had discussed this matter, however, with members of the Executive Committee and it would be our purpose to return the contribution to the contributors. We have an international committee selected to make, what we plan to call, the "Louis Bromfield award," annually to some outstanding person making a contribution to conservation and it may be that some of the contributors to the Malabar project will permit the contributions to be used in connection with this Louis Bromfield award, in event we are unsuccessful in financing the proposed plan. I hasten to add, however, that everything looks most encouraging. We have received one check for $30,000 and an indication that more would be available from this same source. Furthermore, on the $85,000 loan from the Noble Foundation it is not likely that we shall pay an interest on this loan. Some checks for $1000 have come in and others are promised and we are making plans to conduct a campaign in certain cities, especially Cleveland and Mansfield, Ohio, as well as a campaign by mail for gifts and contributions. (Fink, 1957).

Even before this fundraising campaign had raised much money, Friends of the Land began to operate Malabar Farm in preparation for establishing their Louis Bromfield Institute. Sunday afternoon tours of Malabar Farm were resumed on August 4, 1957, and were initially conducted by W. Hughes Barnes, Professor of Biology at Muskingum College ("Malabar Farm tours to resume", 1957). In February, 1958, Friends of the Land hired Dr. Floyd Chapman to become the Resident Ecologist at Malabar Farm ("Wild life expert", 1958). Dr. Chapman had degrees in Botany, Zoology, and Wildlife Management from Ohio State University and had worked for 17 years for the Ohio State Division of Wildlife, as well as two years with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. One of Dr. Chapman's jobs at Malabar Farm was to catalogue the growing ecological library, which already had 264 conservation, scientific, or agricultural journals, the manuscripts of Hugh H. Bennett, materials published by Friends of the Land, and books on conservation and ecology donated by Ollie Fink and Dr. Jonathan Forman as well as those of Louis Bromfield.

On April 26-27, 1958, Friends of the Land held an Ecological Colloquium at Malabar Farm, where they looked in great detail at every aspect of the farm and published the results in the Summer and Fall 1958 issues of *Land and Water*. Topics discussed and analyzed included geology, soils, flora, wildlife, water, and forest management. These presentations were probably the most detailed look at the ecology of Malabar Farm ever made and included a hand-drawn soil map of Malabar Farm and another of the land capability ratings at Malabar. There was also a detailed description of the forest research being conducted in the Malabar Woods. The purpose

of this colloquium was to set a sound scientific basis for the educational and research work to be done by the Louis Bromfield Institute as soon as enough funds were raised. Three nature trails were also begun in 1958, and beginning in May, guests to Malabar were also offered tours of the Big House on Sunday afternoons for a small fee. Tours of the farm were still free ("Malabar Farm tours resuming", 1958).

The future looked bright for the Louis Bromfield Institute—or at least the leaders of Friends of the Land tried to make it look bright in their own publications and when they were interviewed by newspaper reporters. Unfortunately, the fundraising campaign was largely unsuccessful. In May of 1958, the *Mansfield News Journal* reported that the $55,000 loan from Mansfield businessmen was due July 24, 1958, one year from the date Friends of the Land had cashed their check in 1957 ("Mortgage hinges on drive," 1958). The article optimistically concluded that, "The fund raising campaign, which was launched last week by mail, is seeking $800,000 with which the trustees hope to pay off the two mortgages and operate Malabar Farm as an ecologic center for agricultural research and study" ("Mortgage hinges on drive", 1958). Not only did the fundraising campaign fail to raise the $800,000 predicted here, it failed to raise even the $55,000 required to repay the Mansfield part of the loan, let alone the $85,000 owed to the Noble Foundation. Once again, the future of Malabar was uncertain—and the solution to the financial difficulties would be one of the most controversial decisions ever made by Friends of the Land.

How You Can Help

Conservation of our water, land and natural resources and the meeting of the problems of food production, nutrition and the harnessing of nature to aid and benefit mankind is not only America's number one problem but a world-wide concern.

The Louis Bromfield Institute is a step toward the solution of this basic problem. The task before it is vital and necessary. It must succeed.

All beginnings are difficult and your help now is most important to the success of the Institute.

Your financial help is deeply needed. All contributions are deductible for tax purposes. The Louis Bromfield Institute welcomes legacies and capital gifts, either for endowment or to be used during a specified term of years.

Remember

If you are an industrialist you and your organization have a vital interest in the conservation of our nation's soil, water and resources.

If you are a business man your continued prosperity hinges on an expanded population adequately fed, housed and clothed.

If you are a farmer or rancher your existence depends on the wise use of our resources.

If you are a city or suburban dweller your health, happiness and welfare depends on the soil, water and food productivity of our nation.

We Need Your Assistance and Interest

Make your check payable to the Louis Bromfield Institute of the Friends of the Land and send it to Louis Bromfield Institute National Development Committee, 681 Union Commerce Bldg., Cleveland 14, Ohio.

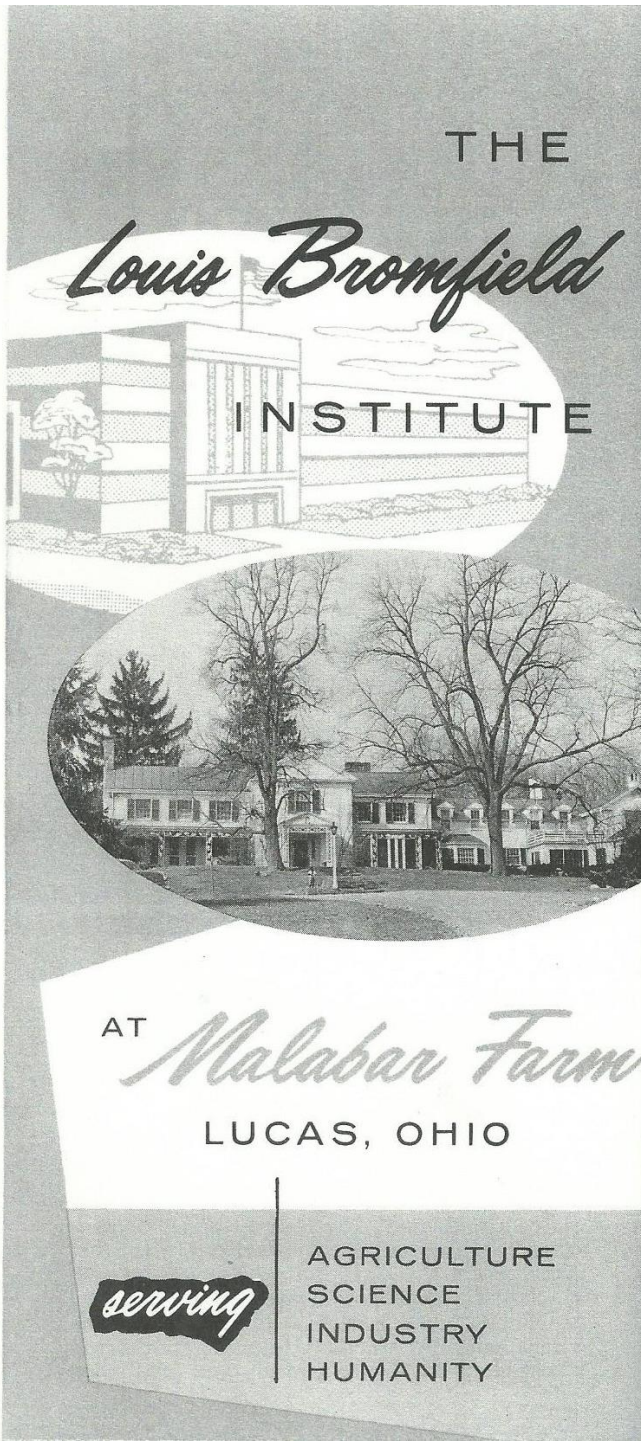


Figure 42: Cover of fundraising brochure for the Louis Bromfield Institute at Malabar Farm. The background cover on the front was originally blue. Box 139, Folder 2263, Louis Bromfield Collection.

A Controversial Decision: Formation of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation

Friends of the Land kept good records of the newspaper articles published about Malabar Farm and their work they were doing there. They also wrote frequently about Malabar Farm in their magazine, *Land and Water*, and mentioned in the last issue for 1958 that Malabar Farm would now be managed by a separate non-profit organization, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation. After this announcement, they published two more issues of *Land and Water* in 1959, and then abruptly ceased publication of the magazine. Whenever Malabar Farm is mentioned after 1958 in newspaper articles, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation is reported as owning and operating the farm. Much later, in 1972, the Noble Foundation is mentioned as owning the entire mortgage to the farm, including the $55,000 originally loaned by the Mansfield businessmen. There is very little information available as to exactly what was different between the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation and Friends of the Land, and many historians have assumed that the two organizations were synonymous.

Fortunately, a box of papers in the Friends of the Land collection (Box 109), housed at the Ohio History Center in Columbus, Ohio, contains unpublished documents from Ollie Fink, Dr. Jonathan Forman, Ralph Cobey, and other members of Friends of the Land which explain better than anything else what exactly happened in 1958 when the title of Malabar Farm was transferred to the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation. The story revolves mostly around Ralph Cobey, president of the Perfection Steel Body Co. of Galion, Ohio and by 1958 also president of Friends of the Land, who is either the hero of the story (according to himself) or the villain (according to Ollie Fink). The two other leaders of Friends of the Land who are most important in this history are Dr. Jonathan Forman, M.D., a Columbus physician and editor of the Ohio State Medical Journal ("Friends of the Land operate Malabar", 1957), and Ollie E. Fink of Zanesville, Ohio, Executive Secretary of Friends of the Land.

On December 17, 1958, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation was incorporated and took over the title and operation of Malabar Farm from Friends of the Land ("The Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm Foundation", 1958). According to a newspaper article announcing this transfer of ownership, "The farm would continue to be operated as an ecological center and Friends of the Land would continue to maintain an office at Malabar Farm" ("Gets title", 1958). The article announcing this in *Land and Water* mentioned nothing about financial difficulties, but maintained that "From the very first as soon as the agreement to purchase Malabar Farm was signed by Friends of the Land, many of its Directors insisted that it would be necessary to set up a separate foundation to own and manage it" ("The Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm Foundation", 1958). This article, probably written by Dr. Forman, also announced this:

> At its first meeting the membership of the Foundation unanimously elected Ralph Cobey, President of Friends of the Land and a well known industrialist of Galion, Ohio; William Locke, the former mayor of Mansfield and successful business man who headed THE LOUIS BROMFIELD MALABAR FARM TRUSTEESHIP of Mansfield that loaned Friends of the Land the first $56,000

> with which to purchase the Farm; and Jonathan Forman of Columbus, Ohio, the immediate past president of Friends of the Land and now chairman of the Board of Directors of Friends of the Land to fill these trusteeships. Mr. Cobey has been successfully operating Malabar Farm along with his brother, Herbert, since the last illness of "Mr. B." So it was but natural that he should be elected chairman of the Trustees and given the responsibility of continuing to operate the Farm…Chairman Ralph Cobey in accepting the chairmanship asked for the full cooperation of every officer and member of Friends of the Land in carrying out the work of Louis Bromfield in leading the way in the "Agricultural Revolution." "This he said was the purpose for which Friends of the Land undertook its Malabar project. It is all in the family, after all," he said. "There is work enough for all—So I hope that everyone will put himself into the task before us." ("The Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm Foundation", 1958).

What the general public did not know, nor the Friends of the Land members who read this article, was that the real reason for the creation of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation was financial. Friends of the Land was unable to repay the $55,000 loan from the Mansfield businessmen and the transfer of title to the new Foundation, with Ralph Cobey as manager of the farm, was part of a private settlement reached between Cobey and the Noble Foundation of Ardmore, Oklahoma, which took on the entire $140,000 mortgage except for $15,000 held by Ralph Cobey. A little more insight as to what exactly happened during the trip to Oklahoma can be gained from a letter written to Ellen Bromfield Geld by C.J. "Bill" Solomon, a director of Friends of the Land who had been a good friend of Louis Bromfield. Solomon wrote that the Cobey family was not happy with the way Ralph Cobey was running their business and were going to make his brother Herb the president of the company instead of Ralph. Apparently it was actually Solomon who suggested that Friends of the Land ask the Noble Foundation for more funds, who arranged the trip, and who came up with the idea of forming a new foundation to manage Malabar. The description by Solomon gives more details about how the foundation was formed than any other available source, as well as showing some insight into the character of Ralph Cobey, and thus is quoted here in some length:

> I suggested contacting the Nobels [sic]. While he [Ralph] was hesitant, he agreed to permit me to set up a meeting but did not encourage me as to the success of the meeting. I immediately called Sam Nobel [sic] and asked for an appointment for Ralph and I. I told him we would like to meet with them in regard to the Malabar Farm without going into detail. Ellen, he was very receptive. He not only said yes but agreed to send their plane after us. We arrived there on a Friday, they gave us a car, entertained us royally and flew us home on Sunday night…
>
> Ralph, Herb and I held a meeting in my room Friday night trying to decide how to approach the Nobels [sic] on the subject we came for. They both lost their nerve, and insisted that I wait until the next day so we spent that night attending a big party at Sam's house. We were to look over their drilling operations and ranches on Saturday. Before the tour I got Ralph and Herb together again and

again they said wait until Saturday night. So after a very strenuous day we returned to our room to rest a bit before attending a big party at their ranch, this time. But I didn't rest. I went to their room and said "Damn it, this is our last chance to try for financial assistance." Now the two big executives, Ralph and Herb got provoked and they decided that this was strictly a pleasure trip and that they would be embarrassed to ask for this favor and said they were only interested in the social part of this trip and that we should go home and write them a letter. This irked me so I closed the conversation went back to my room with the determination that if I had the opportunity at the party I would ask them myself…

I got Sam Nobel [sic], and Cecil Forbes in a corner and I called Ralph and Herb over. I might mention, Ellen, that it was a hell of a big party. But I got the five of us to ourselves and I told them the story of the farm from the time when Mr. "B" passed away to the present including the Mansfield group bringing suit. Sam said, how much money do you need? I told him $30,000. He said, you are not going to lose the farm we are loaning you the money. Ellen, in seconds I thought of the following, and I said we came to borrow $30,000, but we would like to have you take over the Malabar Farm into your Foundation, to preserve Mr. Bromfield's name, honor, theories, principles and the Malabar Farm. Cecil interrupted with this statement, "Sam, we can't do that but if you are willing we will create a new foundation and call it "The Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation". Ellen, I was exhausted mentally but will never be any happier. Herb and Ralph sat there with their mouths hanging open, flabbergasted. Sam agreed but suggested that we enjoy the evening and meet the next day in their directors room at Ardmore for more final arrangements. From the start to the end of this subject did not take more than 15 mins. that evening. So we settled down to having a wonderful time.

On Sunday at our meeting it was decided that the directors of the foundation would be Ralph, Dr. Foreman [sic] and Bill Soloman [sic] from Ohio and of course two from out there for a total of five. I do not know what happened but within a week after returning home Ralph hired an attorney at a high cost and made a big project of the whole thing, where I had an attorney who would have charged nothing because I convinced him it was a civic project. We had to acknowledge from one of you children on a move of the Foundation, which I happily received from Hope. Ralph was mad because I told her the facts about our financial condition, and from there on I did nothing right, to the extent that Ralph removed me as a director and replaced me with Bill Locke, the insurance agent from Mansfield, who did not know your father or Malabar from a load of hay. In one of his moments of anger he said and I quote, "I didn't know Mr. "B" like you did but you can't forget he is dead" unquote. So this brings another ending to another chapter of life.

I am happy that I had a part in sealing, at the very highest peak, your father's name and what he stood for, forever. Ellen, I believe in the Hereafter and should I meet your father I am sure he will be very gracious and say a job well done. (Solomon, 1959).

The formation of the new Louis Bromfield Malabar Foundation and its subsequent take-over by Ralph Cobey caused a major rift between Cobey and Ollie Fink, Executive Secretary of Friends of the Land. Fink felt that Cobey was overstepping his bounds by making this decision without the approval of the Friends of the Land Board of Directors and complained about it to Dr. Jonathan Forman, who was a Trustee of the new Foundation. In a letter to Ollie Fink dated January 15, 1959 (reproduced in Appendix E), Dr. Jonathan Forman tried to reconcile Fink and Cobey. He explained that the mortgage on Malabar was held by businessmen who were sympathetic to the cause of Friends of the Land and who had known and respected Louis Bromfield, but expected their loans to be repaid in a reasonable amount of time. The Mansfield group of businessmen, "reading of the great names composing our Committee of 100, the employment of high grade scientists to live at Malabar Farm, and going on our conducted tours were impressed with our prosperity and, of course, found us delinquent in our indebtedness to them and were ready to foreclose on their mortgage" (Forman, 1959). Forman says that at this time Friends of the Land had collected over $47,000 for Malabar, which was spent on maintenance instead of being used to pay back the loan. Forman, who did not go on the trip to Oklahoma and presumably got his information from Ralph Cobey, gave a rather different account of the trip than the one written by Solomon:

> Something had to be done and Ralph took the best way out. He was generous enough to buy out the Mansfield group and get them off his and our neck just as they were determined to foreclose. Please, do not forget that in the meantime, the reputation of FOL as a business organization in the area grew worse and worse…Now, we were through when Ralph and Solomon went to Oklahoma for relief and to insure that we could go on with the project. Now, picture Ralph's predicament. He was in no position to bargain for he had nothing but trouble to trade. He comes before men who hold a delinquent mortgage—an $85,000 mortgage in default! He is glad to agree to their terms which were only those that good business men formed for the protection of their funds…They know what we are up against—and left Ralph no alternative but to agree. (Forman, 1959).

According to Forman, the final settlement that Cobey and his lawyer made with the Noble Foundation was that the title to Malabar would be transferred to a newly formed foundation, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation, and that Cobey would be the head of this Foundation since he had a financial interest in the matter. Noble took on the entire mortgage for Malabar except for the $15,000 still held by Ralph Cobey. They reasoned that if Cobey had a financial interest in Malabar, he would work to make it succeed. Thus, on December 17, 1958, Friends of the Land passed a resolution to transfer the title of Malabar Farm to the newly incorporated Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation. This resolution released Friends of the Land from the $140,000 mortgage but also took away all of their interests in Malabar Farm and did not reimburse them for the significant amount of money the organization had already invested in Malabar. According to this resolution, Friends of the Land had invested $35,000 into Malabar Farm, which would be forfeited to the new Foundation, along with their $2500 interest

in the mortgage and all real and personal property at Malabar (Cobey, 1958). Friends of the Land also agreed to "relinquish all responsibility for the operation of said farm, agree to refrain from making any further commitments or expenditures, or to raise any additional money" for Malabar Farm (Cobey, 1958).

The conditions of this transfer were very hard on Friends of the Land; they not only lost Malabar, but they also lost all the money that they had invested in it over the previous two years. Once they signed the agreement, they were no longer allowed to have anything to do with the operation of Malabar Farm, not even to raise funds for it if they so desired. After spending the previous two years campaigning so hard to save Malabar, this loss must have been very hard on Ollie Fink, who was Executive Secretary of Friends of the Land and had worked hard to save Malabar, yet was not even on the Board of Trustees for the new foundation. Fink felt that Ralph Cobey was acting with his own personal interests in mind rather than those of Friends of the Land, or even what Louis Bromfield would have done at Malabar. In a letter which he addressed to the Board of Directors of Friends of the Land, probably sometime in 1959, he explained his reasons for believing that Ralph Cobey, as president of the Perfection Body Co., was more interested in promoting his own farm machinery at Malabar than in continuing the work of Louis Bromfield. Fink had other issues with Cobey as well and gives another side to the story in his report to the Board of Directors, which is reproduced in full in Appendix F:

> First, let me explain that I personally feel that the negotiations in connection with the transfer of the Malabar project to the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation, all handled by the President and his personal attorney "by passing" the National office of Friends of the Land, in my opinion, misrepresented the true conditions to the Directors. At least by influence, it was implied that the Trustees of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation would be in charge of the program and operations at Malabar. It will come as a surprise to you as a Director that Ralph Cobey as President of FOL arranged that he be the operating head of Malabar Farm. To have accomplished this without the deliberation and action of the Trustees, in my opinion, means that Mr. Cobey violated the trust we as directors had placed in him by conferring the office of President upon him, and that he used the opportunity to advance his personal prestige and power. (Fink, 1959).

In this report, Fink said that Cobey put farm machinery manufactured by his company in use at Malabar and "removed a great deal of that which Louis Bromfield had used" (Fink, 1959). He felt that this was a conflict of interests and did not reflect well on Friends of the Land. Fink said that it was Cobey who spent the money raised by the Friends of the Land fundraising campaign on maintenance rather than paying off the loan, even though Friends of the Land had contributed most of the money they had raised in the past two years toward saving Malabar. The funds donated by Friends of the Land to save Malabar were not returned when the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation took over, as were the funds of the businessmen who had made loans to Malabar. Fink felt that Jonathan Forman had a divided interest by serving both on

the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation and the Friends of the Land board and felt that, "in my opinion [he] fails to look at the facts realistically. He is reluctant to accept the possibility that Mr. Cobey has not acted in good faith" (Fink, 1959). Fink also said that Cobey had canceled previously scheduled Friends of the Land programs at Malabar the day of the program without consulting anyone. Later on, in a personal letter to Mrs. Ruth Sterling, probably written late in 1959 or early in 1960, Fink expressed again his concerns with what Cobey had done at Malabar:

> First let me report that it is rather difficult for me to get information about what is going on at Malabar. I do not feel that I am welcome, in spite of the fact that it was mainly through my personal effort that Malabar was saved.
>
> They issue a newsletter which I presume you receive. The November issue reported that they had been granted tax deductible status for gifts by the Internal Revenue Department. I do not believe they have made much effort to raise funds for the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation up to this date. They will no doubt make a great effort now.
>
> As I have previously reported to you, Mr. Cobey and his personal attorney handled the FOL negotiations in setting up the Foundation. As a result when the facts were known (before the selection of the Trustees of the Foundation) Mr. Cobey was named overseer of Malabar. This should have been a duty of the Trustees as a group. Mr. Cobey has had three farm managers during the 1959 year. This fact shows the lack of qualification of Mr. Cobey. I have had reports from some who were very well acquainted with the buildings and program at Malabar who have reported to me that during the past year there has been a noticeable deterioration.
>
> I can assure you that many of my friends are greatly disappointed in what has come to pass in the management of Malabar. Of course Dr. Forman is one of the Trustees, but in my opinion is not likely to fight for what FOL had planned for Malabar. After nearly 20 years of a close personal friendship, he has in my opinion became a party of this 'sell out' of Louis Bromfield's ideals, to protect the position of prestige which he felt he gained by being named a trustee. He has been critical beyond what you can imagine of my stand on this matter. Bryce Browning and others familiar with the past developments fail to understand Dr. Forman's actions.
>
> Finally it is my hope that the Noble Foundation directors of Ardmore, Oklahoma (OIL wealthy men) will grow unhappy about the arrangement they have made with Mr. Cobey and permit some wealthy friend of our departed Louis, and take over the Foundation and set up a new management more in keeping with what FOL started out to do. One such person who has a great interest in improving the situation at Malabar and a great fortune to make this important is Miss Doris Duke. Please consider this confidential unless you have contacts with her in which you might explain how happy you would be to have Malabar achieve the greatest position of recognition in years to come. She is fairly well informed about what has taken place at Malabar and is employing at least two key agriculturalists from Malabar. Mr. Cobey has fired everyone that had any connection with Malabar while LB or FOL had it except one person.

> I am sorry I cannot give you a more encouraging report about Malabar. I do live in hopes that changes will come to pass. With best personal regards, I remain, sincerely Ollie. (Fink, c. 1959)

Perhaps Ralph Cobey was forced to become farm manager to satisfy the demands of the Noble Foundation, as Dr. Forman maintained. Or perhaps he overstepped his bounds and worked outside of Friends of the Land to take over Malabar Farm, as Fink thought. Cobey may have saved Malabar from being foreclosed—or it may have been his fault that the loan was not paid back in the first place. Probably no one will ever know the truth of this situation, but it does seem that most people, except for Dr. Jonathan Forman, disliked Ralph Cobey and felt that he cared only about his personal interests and not about Louis Bromfield's ideals or Malabar Farm itself. Certainly the formation of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation caused a huge rift between Cobey and Fink. One thing is sure, however. Even if it was not operated as well as it could have been, Malabar Farm was saved from foreclosure—but the loss of the farm was the end for Friends of the Land.

The End of Friends of the Land

> It has been an instructive experience, but a sad finale to a citizens' society starting 20 years ago "For the Conservation of Soil, Rain and Man," and ending in frantic efforts to save itself. (Lord, 1960).

After the great work that Friends of the Land had done for conservation, the end of the organization in 1960 after the formation of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation was indeed a "sad finale", not least because the true state of the organization was denied by its leaders until the very end. As far back as 1947 Russell Lord, editor of *The Land*, had warned:

> The aging process in organizations can…prove fatal. The danger in any organization, as wise old Liberty Hyde Bailey once remarked, is that it may grow to forget the job it set out to do, become principally concerned in preserving its own form, size, shape and prestige, and in keeping its name before the public. There have been conservation societies whose chief aim as they aged seemed to be to conserve the said society. The way to get around that, probably, is constantly to enlist new blood and give voice to fresh points of view. (Lord, 1947, p. 137).

Unfortunately, after World War II, Friends of the Land did not seem to be able to get new blood into the organization, especially not from the younger generation. Louis Bromfield was chairman of the organization until his death in 1956, and as early as 1952 he realized that Friends of the Land was in trouble because "I don't see any younger men coming on to take our place and without younger men we are headed exactly nowhere" (Bromfield, c. 1952b). The best years of Friends of the Land were the same as the golden age of Malabar Farm and Louis Bromfield: from about 1945-1952. During the war, Friends of the Land had fought the battle for conservation, and after the war, they were able to implement their ideas on a larger scale. Probably the Soil Conservation Special train in November, 1947 was the zenith for Friends of the Land; as prosperity rebounded after the war, the American public began to think less about conservation or even about agriculture. Perhaps this was because Friends of the Land, Hugh H. Bennett, and other soil conservationists had been so successful; after all, the Dust Bowl and terrible gully erosion were mostly things of the past, and many people must have agreed with Louis Bromfield's confident assertion in 1952 that "It seems to me that the battle for soil conservation…has been won, and we are left with no issue. Soil conservation will be continued and developed from here on out for two reasons (I) because farmers and landowners have become educated (2) and more important—that the working of the laws of economics will force such practices as indeed they are already doing" (Bromfield, c. 1952a).

Even if the battle for soil conservation had been won (which may or may not have been true; not every farmer in 1952 was using conservation farming practices), the war for conservation was by no means over. Immediately after World War II, most people did not yet realize the dangers of the new chemicals and technologies that they had launched on the world.

Friends of the Land, however, was far ahead of their time when it came to addressing the conservation issues of the second half of the 20th century. As early as 1950 they were voicing the dangers of air and water pollution; in 1953 they lamented the destruction of the American wilderness. Nine years before Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* would wake up the public to the dangers of insecticides, Friends of the Land published an article about DDT reporting that it persisted in the soil and killed songbirds in areas where it was applied. Prophetically, they stated that, "Although there are a number of useful insecticides available today, we would be foolish to believe that any problems stemming from the use of these poisons are tapering off. Actually, they are just beginning. The detrimental effects of these present insecticides have not been fully evaluated, and there will be a constant flood of new pesticides appearing…We are truly living in a chemically sprayed world" (Cochran, 1953, p. 145).

Friends of the Land was willing to shift their focus from primarily soil conservation to include other, more urgent issues in the second half of the 20th century. However, before *Silent Spring*, most people did not even realize that these were issues—especially not the all-important young people needed to continue the organization. The founding members, though still passionate about conservation, were aging. There was dispute among board members as to which way the organization should go, and they were continually beset with financial difficulties. As the original members began to retire or pass away, they were not replaced by the younger generation, and the organization began a slow decline, perhaps as early as 1952 or 1953.

Probably the single event that spelled the beginning of the end for Friends of the Land was the cessation of publication of *The Land*, their quarterly magazine edited by Russell Lord. By 1953, *The Land* was 112-120 pages per issue, with four issues a year (Forman, 1952, p. 351). Members also received *The Land News* four times a year, which had 36 pages and was mailed out halfway between issues of *The Land*. These publications cost over $5 per year per member to print, and annual dues to Friends of the Land were only $5. This was the price which had been set back in 1941, before the war and before inflation, yet for some reason the organization did not want to raise dues. They thought that, "To raise dues, however, would defeat or hinder our Society's basic purpose, to expand, to grow, to reach more and more people and enroll them as actually active members of Friends of the Land. So this did not seem wise" (Forman, 1952, p. 351).

Since they refused to raise dues, Friends of the Land decided that if they could just recruit enough members, they could get bulk discounts on printing and make their publications affordable. They formed a separate non-profit organization called The Land Trustees, which published *The Land* for six more issues, up through Volume XIII, Number 2 (1954). Russell Lord, the editor of *The Land*, felt that the solution was to find a publisher who would get the magazine out to the public. In an editorial, he wrote, "We want to break the rim that for twelve and three-quarter years has held the circulation of The Land almost exclusively within the limits of a Society membership…We have reason to feel that, in point of generalized human appeal, our magazine is unique…We must reach out now to the general public, to everyone we can interest" (Lord, 1953, p. 385).

As late as the second-to-last issue, published in 1954, The Land Trustees still hoped to get *The Land* into the hands of the people by expanding its circulation (Williams, 1954). However, according to Russell Lord, "Midway in the 13th volume, a rift between *The Land Trustees* and FOTL, partly relating to differences as to policy but largely to disagreement on the sharing of revenue, led to an open rupture and a parting of the ways" (Lord, 1960). Without the 5500 members of Friends of the Land as subscribers, Lord had no market for *The Land* and had to stop publishing it, although he still held the legal rights to the publication's title, which meant that Friends of the Land could no longer call their magazine *The Land*. Using the same format as their former *Land News*, Friends of the Land began publishing a much shorter magazine titled *Land and Water*, which they sent to their members without ever informing them of the real reason for the change.

Members of Friends of the Land must have been surprised when they received their first issue of *Land & Water* in Spring 1955. This magazine, edited by Dr. Jonathan Forman, Ollie Fink, and Rodgor Connor, is the same length and format as the former *Land News*—about 30 pages per issue. It was not a scientific journal but was written in a much less personal style than *The Land* and had significant overlap with articles previously published in *The Land*. In the second issue, the editors printed several letters that subscribers had sent commenting on the new magazine. Some comments were positive; Walter C. Gumbel, a Soil Conservationist, thought it "much more useful and practical than 'The Land'"("Editor's mail box", 1955). Several negative comments were also published which may help explain the drop in membership in Friends of the Land from 5500 in 1954 to only 2500 in 1956:

> A good many members to whom I have talked state they would have been willing to pay an additional $5.00 per year for their subscription alone and it seems rather doubtful to me that we will be able to hold a good many of these people. They are, rather interestingly, some of the ones who have furnished some of the best intellectual and financial leadership to Friends of the Land…Leonard Hall…
>
> I was never so shocked and disappointed as when I saw your latest quarterly Land and Water. Does this mean we will have no more of the fine editing of Russell Lord and the wonderful woodcuts and drawings of Kate Lord? I can't help feeling that your periodical has dropped from the No. 1 plus in the U.S. to the very low. James F. Luft. ("Editor's mail box", 1955).

In 1956, Friends of the Land had only 2574 members, a little more than half of the members on their mailing list merely two years before (Fink, c. 1958). With the death of Louis Bromfield and the drive to save Malabar, the efforts of Ollie Fink and Jonathan Forman were directed into the Malabar project and not to fundraising, and the number of members had decreased to 2023 by 1958 (Fink, c. 1958). When the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation took over the operation of Malabar, Friends of the Land lost both the farm and all the money they had invested in it. The Summer 1959 issue of *Land and Water* was the last magazine that members received from the organization, and they got nothing else until February

15, 1960, when they received a letter signed by Ollie Fink announcing that Friends of the Land was going to be merged with the Izaak Walton League of America:

> Dear Friends: After several months of delay we are now in the position to bring to you the information about our situation. In more recent years there has been a continual decrease in membership and therefore in funds. Some of our directors in the past years noting the declining revenue and the increasing costs of publication and other operating costs have suggested that it would be desirable for some of the smaller conservation groups to combine their strength and jointly finance their programs. The late Louis Bromfield before his death often stated that he thought the battle for conservation had been won. The mission of Friends of the Land has been to educate city people as to the importance of conservation. The almost universal acceptance by city people that conservation is important represents a great victory for FOTL and all other conservation groups. This does not mean that the task is done, but rather that a favorable opinion has been created.
>
> Director Bryce Browning, one of the founders of FOTL was appointed Chairman of a special committee months before the 1959 annual meeting to study and investigate the possibilities of amalgamating FOTL with another conservation group….He has recommended that FOTL merge with the Izaak Walton League of America….The League Executive Committee has expressed a thought that they will make every effort to have the next vacancy on their Board filled by a key FOTL leader. Their expanded program will include much of the FOTL philosophy…The question has been raised by some officials of the IWLA, 'How will the FOTL members feel about the action of the FOTL Board in making them members of IWLA?' We hope you will drop us a note expressing your appraisal of the proposal and we hope that you will help us by continuing your membership in the future. Sincerely yours, Ollie E. Fink. (Fink, 1960).

It had taken some negotiations between Fink and the Izaak Walton League to come up with this letter. Initially IWLA was hesitant about the proposed "merger" because Friends of the Land had only 1800 members at the time. The executive director of the Izaak Walton League of America, Frank Gregg, expressed doubt as to whether the League would benefit from this. He felt like Friends of the Land "was a very highly specialized group in the sense of a special concern for what one might call natural farming and land use methods…If this is true I would hazard the case that members of Friends of the Land would be sorely disappointed if they were led to believe that the League's magazine or its members shared this special enthusiasm" (Gregg, 1959). He did not want the former Friends of the Land members to become "enemies" of the Izaak Walton League because it did not take such a strong stand on soil conservation. The president of the Izaak Walton League, George F. Jackson, was not sure about the idea of transferring the Friends of the Land memberships to the League: "Speaking for myself, and the same applies to most people, I would not react favorably to the action of the Board of Directors of an organization which I belonged to summarily announcing that the organization was

dissolved and that henceforth I belonged to another and would pay my dues to them" (Jackson, 1960, January 20).

Members of Friends of the Land received a promotional mailing for the Izaak Walton League of America, which contained letters from George F. Jackson, president of the League, and Ollie Fink; two copies of *Outdoor America*, the magazine of the Izaak Walton League of America; and other promotional materials about the League. Friends of the Land members were encouraged to write back and say what they thought, and nearly a hundred did (Jackson, 1960, January 20). Some were already members of the Izaak Walton League and thought that the merger was a good idea; others were not sure that the League had the same goals as Friends of the Land once had. Many felt that Friends of the Land was not nearly as successful as a conservation organization as it had once been, as shown by the letters quoted below:

> I wish to say that the proposed absorption of F.O.T.L. members into the Izaak Walton League seems a wise solution of the problem. I have naturally been disappointed in the decline of Friends of the Land, for I thought it had a role to play in the conservation field and at one time had been doing a fine job. The excellent magazine, *The Land*, and the various annual conferences did a lot of good. Justifiable though it may have been, the decision to drop publication of *The Land* was the beginning of the end for F.O.T.L. A less attractive program started a downward spiral, with declining membership and further reductions in programs. Now that Malabar Farm has been set up as a separate entity, it is sensible to dissolve F.O.T.L. and merge its remaining members to join I.W.L.A. (Stone, 1960).

> Ollie—I had just about decided to drop membership in 'Friends,' after being a member since the organization started nearly 20 years ago. I'm sure that you, Ollie, have been well aware of the decline in its vitality as a stimulating influence in conservation. This is understandable, because all human efforts depend on people to make them succeed, and "Friends" has gradually suffered from the loss of some of its strongest leaders. I am not sure that the Izaak Walton League will do what our old FOTL used to do, but at least the League is strong and influential. My remittance may of course be used as you see fit. It is hoped that, in considering this merger with IWL, you are making a good move for conservation. (Dresback, 1960).

Although he perceived some of the letters as "hostile" and others indifferent, Frank Gregg wrote to Ollie Fink on March 24, 1960, that "On the balance, the majority clearly favors the consolidation. This appears to be plenty of encouragement to go ahead" (Gregg, 1960, March 24). Another letter mailed out to Friends of the Land members from the Izaak Walton League of America by George F. Jackson, President of IWLA, informed them:

> We have received a warm and favorable response to the letters signed by Ollie E. Fink and myself proposing a consolidation of Friends of the Land into the Izaak Walton League. You'll recall that officers and directors of Friends of the Land

> had concluded that the best interests of conservation could be served if members of Friends of the Land would throw their support behind a well-established conservation organization embracing the purposes of Friends of the Land. Accordingly, it was proposed that the Friends of the Land would dissolve, and the Izaak Walton League of America would welcome members of Friends of the Land as members of the League…As matters now stand, the legal dissolution is proceeding as planned. Such matters move slowly, however. (Jackson, 1960).

According to the official Certificate of Dissolution, the trustees of Friends of the Land had voted to dissolve the organization on September 18, 1959, but it was February 20, 1961 before the legal dissolution was complete ("Certificate", 1960; United States District Court, 1961). The Certificate was signed by Ralph Cobey and Ollie Fink and said, in part, "Resolved that Friends of the Land wind-up its affairs and dissolve; that the objectives of the corporation are entirely abandoned and that their accomplishment is impracticable." It was a sad ending, indeed, to an organization that Louis Bromfield had once thought could not die (Bromfield, 1945, p. 285). The Izaak Walton League of America took the membership lists and some other items from the Friends of the Land office, which was at Ollie Fink's Farm, Hidden Acres, near Zanesville, Ohio. They wanted to make sure that the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation did not get access to the membership lists, "since that would certainly tend to drain off some of the potential membership that we are hoping to realize" (Gregg, 1960, June 14). They left the rest of the Friends of the Land records with Ollie Fink, and thanks to his wife donating them to the Ohio History Society in 1972, they have been preserved to document this unique conservation organization which lasted 20 years, through one of the greatest transitional periods in American agriculture.

Perhaps it was the purchase of Malabar Farm that finally destroyed Friends of the Land; quite likely the organization would not have lasted many more years regardless since it was already in decline. Their last major act as an organization had been to save Malabar, and the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation which they had created would outlive the Friends of the Land by over a decade. The Louis Bromfield Institute would never come to pass, but Malabar Farm itself would continue to be preserved.

Malabar under Dr. Floyd Chapman: 1959-1962

Shortly after the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation took over legal title to Malabar Farm, they began publishing a newsletter called the "Malabar Farm Newsletter." This newsletter was edited by Dr. Floyd Chapman, the Foundation's Resident Ecologist, and began publication in March, 1959. At first, things were going quite well at Malabar. The dairy herd was improving and milk production was going up. A new 500 gallon bulk milk tank had been installed on October 26, 1958 (Chapman, 1959, no. 1). By April of 1959, Malabar had become the largest producer of whole milk in Richland County ("Malabar becomes major dairy farm", 1959"). The Foundation continued to operate Louis Bromfield's roadside market by the big spring, and Dr. Chapman wrote in the August, 1959 newsletter that "The Malabar roadside market at the Niman spring is doing a very good business and the attractive displays of sweet corn, cabbage, beets, cucumbers, green beans and watercress, cooled and crisped by the perpetually flowing water, are drawing hundreds of customers. People come from considerable distances to obtain vegetables free from chemical sprays and dusts" (Chapman, 1959, no. 5). A novelty crop grown in the vegetable garden was the "tomango," which Dr. Chapman described as "a hybrid of the tomato and mango pepper…excellent for salads, with solid 'meat,' few seeds and just a trace of the mango flavor" (Chapman, 1959, no. 6).

The ecological library continued to expand at Malabar. Mr. and Mrs. Arch Hilsabeck of Chicago, Illinois, donated a children's conservation bookshelf to the library (Chapman, 1959, no. 2). The Malabar Nature Trail was used for many guided hikes but visitors were not allowed to hike it alone due to a lack of appropriate signs (Chapman, 1959, no. 3). During the summer of 1959, a new road with a gentler grade was made to the summit of Mt. Jeez, and a program for international students was offered at Malabar (Chapman, 1959, no. 5). New metal road signs were purchased to help visitors find their way to Malabar, and a description of Malabar was written for the new AAA guidebook (Chapman, 1959, no. 6). It was also in 1959 that plans were first announced to turn the "Bailey Place," the old stone house by the big spring, into a restaurant. Plans were also made to improve the main dairy barn and install a modern milking parlor, as well as to enlarge and improve the vegetable garden (Chapman, 1959, no. 7).

A souvenir shop was opened, which sold "all the Bromfield books, as well as a number of titles on nutrition, health and conservation by other authors, souvenir plates, ash trays, postcards, Malabar honey and other mementos of the farm" (Chapman, 1959, no. 4). This souvenir shop contained a "demonstration of a beehive furnished by A. I. Root Company, Medina" and also a milk dispensing machine (Chapman, 1959, no. 5). All in all, Malabar seemed to be doing quite well in 1959. A reporter for the *Mansfield News Journal* wrote an article in August, 1959, titled "Louis Bromfield would approve changes at Malabar":

> Changes have been made in and around the Big House at Malabar Farm, but they are changes of which its late owner and host would approve…Groups,

> large and small, still visit Malabar, where they find Dr. Floyd Chapman, director of the Malabar Farm Foundation, ready to conduct tours, to answer questions, and to make them as welcome as the hospitable Mr. Bromfield would have done. One of the immediately observable changes at Malabar is the little souvenir shop on the right hand side of the drive. Souvenirs include pictures of Bromfield; desk pen sets bearing his portrait, plates and ash trays on which the Big House is the central decoration; jars of natural unheated wildflower honey; note paper with colorful bird prints; copies of the five books which Bromfield wrote on farming, other books to which he contributed, and some volumes penned by other authors on the subjects of health and nutrition…
>
> In the second room of the building which houses the souvenir shop, there is a large milk dispensing machine where a glass of milk may be obtained for ten cents. Sold on the honor system, you leave your dime in a provided receptacle. Changes effected within the Big House are almost entirely in the basement. The large room which formerly served as a canning kitchen is now a library lined with shelves of books about agriculture, ecology, and nutrition. Reading tables and chairs are also provided…The second room of the basement, formerly a game room, now is a meeting room equipped with chairs, a long table, slide and movie equipment. (Kinney, 1959).

In October, 1959, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation received tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (Chapman, 1959, no. 8). Very little mention of financial difficulties was made in 1959, but a campaign for new members was launched in the February 1960 newsletter. Individual memberships were $5 and "patron" memberships $100 per year, and the benefits included "Guided tours of the Big House, Bromfield's residence, farm tours, guided walks on the nature trials, library privileges, admission to lectures, field days and other events, and the use of picnic tables and campsites. Each member will also receive the NEWSLETTER and any other publications of the Foundation without charge" (Chapman, 1960, no. 11). Soon readers were informed that "The Malabar Farm NEWSLETTER mailing list has grown by leaps and bounds during its relatively short lifetime…As a result, our printing facilities are taxed to the limit and we are getting short of clerical help" (Chapman, 1960, no. 13). This meant that the Newsletter would now only be mailed to people who had purchased memberships.

Other highlights for the year 1960 involved a new concrete, two-lane bridge over Switzer's Creek to replace the old iron bridge, the first Malabar nutrition conference, and directions to Malabar from "the new North-South Freeway (Interstate highway 71)" (Chapman, 1960, nos. 16-18). In 1961, the Foundation inaugurated the "Malabar Junior Explorers program," which brought every single 5th-grade student from the Mansfield Public School system to Malabar for a day-long field trip. In the first year, 961 Mansfield 5th-graders came on the field trip (Chapman, 1961, no. 26). The response to the program was very positive, and "In reading all of the letters from the children it was amazing to the teachers as well as the Malabar staff that the youngsters remembered so much of what they had studied on a very short field trip" (Chapman, 1961, no. 28).

International visitors continued to come to Malabar Farm. Three international students from Iran, Israel, and Mexico spent the summer of 1961 at Malabar Farm. These students were enrolled during the school year at American universities but had spent most of their time in the classroom and were "welcoming the opportunity of coming to Malabar where they can study the American way of life 'at the grass roots level.' There is nothing formal about the international school. Saturdays and Sundays are free but all other days are occupied with field trips to points in Ohio within a hundred miles of Malabar Farm" (Chapman, 1961, no. 29). These field trips included the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station in Wooster, the U.S. Hydrologic Station in Coshocton, "an outstanding sheep farm, food processing factories and farm machinery factories" (Chapman, 1962, January 16). This program culminated with a visit to Malabar Farm by the Iranian Ambassador (Chapman, 1961, no. 30). Another humorous account of an international visitor, from Switzerland, was given in the May 1961 newsletter:

> One rainy day in mid-April, we spied a lone, bedraggled figure walking up the steep road that leads to the big House. Bareheaded and carrying two canvas sacks under his arms, he paused occasionally to rest and look around. It was raining hard. Finally he made it to the front door and explained that he was a Swiss who had read Louis Bromfield's books and had come to see Malabar Farm. There being no bus service from Lucas, five miles distant, he had walked all the way through the driving rain. After his clothing dried out and he had visited with us an hour or so, he insisted on walking back to Lucas in the rain, remarking that it was the usual custom in Switzerland to walk or ride a bicycle. (Chapman, 1961, no. 26).

Another highlight for 1961 was the Malabar herb garden, which contained basil, thyme, savory, marjoram, rosemary, anise, sage, dill, and other herbs. These herbs were dried and sold in the Malabar gift shop (Chapman, 1961, no. 30). New, better signs were erected to point the way to Malabar, and a group of boys and their fathers from the Simon Kenton Chapter of Buckeye Historians was the "first youth camp to camp on Mount Jeez" (Chapman, 1961, no. 31). It was planned to construct a semi-permanent tent camp on Mount Jeez as soon as funding was available. 1961 was also the year that the pioneering soil conservationist Cosmos Blubaugh passed away at the age of 74 (Chapman, 1961, no. 32). A January 8, 1961 article in the *Mansfield News Journal* said that letters occasionally came for Louis Bromfield from people who thought he was still alive, and that it was one of Dr. Chapman's responsibilities to answer these letters. This article also mentioned that "Since he's been at Malabar, Dr. Chapman has also been working on a book about the ecologic activities at Malabar. He's into the third and fourth chapters" (Besch, 1961). This book was never finished and the fate of the manuscript is unknown.

In 1962, Dr. Chapman celebrated the publication of Ellen Bromfield Geld's book, *The Heritage*, by giving a series of talks about Louis Bromfield at the Mansfield Public Library ("Malabar talks", 1962). The Junior Explorers program was continued, and the roadside market was opened at Easter to sell vegetable and flower plants (Chapman, 1962, no. 37). The inventory

at the souvenir shop was increased to include baskets, Malabar honey, and "straw hats to wear on the popular Sunday afternoon farm wagon tours" (Chapman, 1962, no. 38). Toward the end of 1962, Dr. Chapman apparently became frustrated with the constant financial difficulties at Malabar and resigned his position as director. A newspaper article reported:

> Dr. Floyd Chapman has resigned as director and resident ecologist of Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm Foundation and the future of the farm depends on what funds come in within the next few months. The resignation will become effective October 1. These facts were confirmed today by Dr. Jonathan Forman of Columbus, one of the trustees of the foundation. "We can't pay people without funds. The future program of Malabar Farm depends on how successful our fund raising procedures are during the winter," Dr. Forman said. ("Malabar's chief quits", 1962).

An editorial in the *Mansfield News Journal*, written in April of 1962, shows that many people realized that something was "the matter with Malabar" and suggested an interesting solution:

> What is the matter with Malabar? This question is being asked by people who have given generously of their own money to keep the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation going. It is asked by people who were close friends of the Bromfields. And of course it is being asked by the critics who do nothing about Malabar but criticize the way it is being run. The answer we think, is very simple. It has nothing to do with personalities or feuds or financial problems. The place has lost its romance. That's all…
>
> There is plenty of romance in the story of Malabar. And it would be no sin to capitalize on it to preserve Bromfield's dream. Louis himself was never one to miss on the chance to capitalize a romance! Go to Monticello or Mount Vernon. What draws the crowds? Guides tell the visitors what kind of people lived in these historic places. You learn what the Jeffersons and the Washingtons ate. You see where they slept, what they wore. You become acquainted with their hobbies and their foibles. You feel as if you know these early patriots better, more personally. They are, in short, less dead! A conscious effort is made to preserve the properties as they were in the times of their famous owners. That is what seems to be lacking at Malabar. With romance and a sense of immediacy restored, sensible commercial ventures could be related to the farm to augment income from the crops and meet the high cost of maintenance. Indeed, gifts from individuals and foundations might be much less hard to come by if Malabar became truly a slice of American life in the decade of the 'Forties gleaming with the ray of the romantic persons who once passed its rooms and its fields. ("What Malabar could be", 1962).

The Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation responded to the resignation of Dr. Chapman by issuing a very long newspaper statement in which they assured readers that they had "no financial troubles." Although they had made no effort to repay the mortgage to the

Noble Foundation, which is given in this article as $142,535, Ralph Cobey, Dr. Jonathan Forman, and E. B. Howard said that the Foundation's "current assets to current liabilities ratio is eight to one" ("No financial troubles", 1962). In this statement, the three trustees gave this explanation for Dr. Chapman's resignation:

> Dr. Floyd Chapman was engaged here early in the life of the Malabar project as ecologist-in-residence and director of educational activities. "Friends of the Land," who first employed Dr. Chapman, felt that it would soon be possible to secure funds for his salary and maintenance of the farm. His leadership, however, did not gain sufficient support to make this part of the program self-sustaining. The trustees of the Foundation, after considerable investigation and discussion with members of the faculty of some leading educational institutions, came reluctantly to the conclusion that Malabar Farm itself, as presently constituted, is unable to carry out fully the kind of a program originally contemplated, or even all of that part of it which had already been developed. It is hoped by the trustees that it will not be long before additional funds and interest will be forthcoming in sufficient amounts to expand the work of the Foundation to the point where it can and will support the whole of the ecological program as originally contemplated.
>
> In the meantime the funds which have up to this point been devoted to the salary and maintenance of the resident ecologist are now available for the further development of the program, which will eventuate in the securing of more funds and greater support by the members and other interested persons for a properly expanded educational program, adequately financed… In short, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation program to develop and maintain a demonstration farm of modern agriculture and ecological center for the dissemination of knowledge concerning man's interdependence upon soil, water, atmosphere, plants and its fellow creatures has come a long way under the direction and guidance of the distinguished group of citizens. The sound current financial position of the program as a whole and the plans already prepared, as well as those in the making, point to an improved, expanded and better appreciated future for Malabar Farm Foundation, Inc. ("No Financial Troubles", 1962).

With the resignation of Dr. Chapman, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation gave up for good the dream of the Louis Bromfield Institute and Ecologic Center which had been envisioned by Friends of the Land. They would not again hire such a qualified director, and despite their confident assertions in this article, their financial situation would progress from bad to worse. It is obvious that at this point they had made no attempt whatsoever to begin paying back the loan to the Noble Foundation, which had apparently begun to accumulate interest—and they would never repay it. The Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation would continue to operate Malabar for ten more years, during which time their financial situation continued to degrade while they assured their members that things were getting better and better.

The Years of Neglect: 1963-1971

After the resignation of Dr. Chapman, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation was without a director for several months. The October-November and December 1962 newsletters were edited by Dr. Jonathan Forman, and the January, May, and June Newsletters were edited by "Malabar Staff." There were no newsletters between January and May of 1963 and not much was mentioned about what was going on at Malabar during this time, except that they were selling Rachel Carson's new book, *Silent Spring*, in the Malabar Farm Gift Shop (Forman, 1962, no. 43); they planned to expand all programs in the next year if funds permitted (Malabar Staff, 1963, no. 45); and the Big House had been refurnished, painted, and given now curtains (Malabar Staff, 1963, no. 46). A new director, A. W. Short, was selected in May of 1963 ("Malabar Farm selects director", 1963). A. W. Short had a B.S. in Agriculture from the University of West Virginia in 1924, a M.S. in Agriculture from Ohio State University in 1927, had taught vocational agriculture for 10 years, had served 23 years in the Ohio Department of Conservation, and had become the Assistant Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture in 1960 (Short, undated).

Beginning in July of 1963, A. W. Short began editing the Malabar Farm Newsletter. At first he talked about what was actually happening at Malabar Farm. He mentioned that they were again irrigating the garden with water from the big spring, and that in May 310 people had visited the Big House (Short, 1963, no. 48). In August he mentioned that 200 people attended the annual Institute on Soil, Food and Health Relationships (Short, 1963, no. 49), and that a new bull had been purchased in October (Short, 1963, no. 51). Unlike Dr. Chapman, however, Short mentioned very little real "news" in most issues of his newsletter. He was a poor writer and used most of the space in the newsletters to elaborate on his philosophy about Malabar, which seemed to be centered around a sort of "Malabar religion" which believed that Malabar's purposes and goals were good and thus it must prosper and endure forever. He felt that "Malabar Farm is an outstanding example of one of the greatest barriers against communism" (Short, 1964, no. 57). This philosophy was rather confusing, emotional, and difficult to describe except by reproducing some of it here, from the January 1964 Newsletter:

> Malabar is built upon a Rock of strength because what she stands for can be put in the crucible of Hell, Fire and Brimstone as need be, and still come out the same, because Malabar Farm Foundation has unselfish motives originally designed to help people in all walks of life, through the building up, and wise use of our natural resources to cause people through their and our efforts to become stronger, mutually, physically, socially, economically, and spiritually, and at the same time remain humble in the sight of God and our fellowmen here on earth. God first, others second, and ourselves third, is the answer to a lot of the hell, greed, and selfishness that caused countless millions to mourn.…
>
> "What is on the Planning Board for the future of Malabar and all Agriculture? We are pointing the way to a better world for people to live in, and Where are the boundary lines? Should You be asked this question, tell them

> Malabar is bounded on the East by the rising sun, on the North by the northern lights, and the North Pole, on the South by a flock of penguins, and the South Pole, and on the West by the setting sun. So Malabar Boosters, let's just keep on, keeping on, if we come out all right, let's hope God gets the credit, the honor, and the glory—if we come out wrong, all the angels in heaven swearing we did our best, may our name be able to drown out the voices of the selfish minority. We grow too soon old, and too late smart. Right? Your comments on our bulletin endeavors from May 1963 to the present time will be welcome!" (Short, 1964, no. 54).

Apparently some readers did make comments on the newsletters; in the March 1964 Newsletter Short wrote that, "Many members of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation write that they have never been to Malabar…They ask if I would devote some time and space to describing some of the salient features of the famous Louis Bromfield's Malabar, in addition to its philosophy" (Short, 1964, no. 56). This newsletter actually did mention something that was happening at Malabar at the time; the historic stagecoach inn had been converted to a restaurant and was managed by Mrs. Thomas Schwartz of Lucas, Ohio, with an "outstanding 'country style' menu and succulent food preparation" (Short, 1964, no. 56). In future newsletters, Short interspersed his philosophical ramblings with historical information about Malabar, such as when the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation was incorporated, what became of the three Bromfield daughters, and the history of the Big House. He mentioned very little about current events and when he did they were not necessarily at Malabar Farm, such as his description of attending the Farm Science Review at the Ohio State University in 1964 (Short, 1964, no. 64). Although he didn't directly mention anything financial, his membership plea in the August 1964 Newsletter, although rather difficult to follow, seems to suggest that the Foundation was struggling to keep members:

> A vicious cycle—Lest we forget! Lest we forget!
> For the lack of interest, a membership was lost,
> For the lack of a membership, a concern was lost,
> For the lack of concern, a glory was lost,
> For the lack of a glory, a conscience was lost,
> For the lack of a conscience, an unselfish soul was lost,
> For the lack of an unselfish soul, a cause was lost,
> For the lack of a cause, an adult was lost,
> For the lack of an adult, a child was lost
> For the lack of a child, a challenge was lost,
> For the lack of a challenge, a youth center was lost,
> For the lack of a youth center, a Malabar was lost,
> For the lack of a Malabar, a generation was lost,
> For the lack of a generation, an interest was lost.
> DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO MALABAR! (Short, 1964, no. 61).

Newsletters were published regularly throughout 1963 and 1964 (although they contained very little real news), but none were published between January and June 1965. The June 1965 Newsletter began by saying, "Yes, we are aware you have missed three issues of our NEWSLETTER, however, the reasons were compelling. We hope the big news this issue brings will in a measure compensate until we can toss out a bonus issue now and then" (Short, 1965, no. 67). This "big news" was that the Malabar Inn restaurant, which had apparently closed in the meantime (though this was never mentioned in a Newsletter), was reopening under the new management of Polly Kunkle, who had previously owned and operated the "Atmosphere" Restaurant in Mansfield:

> Mrs. Kunkle is transferring her equipment and furnishings from the "Atmosphere" to the Malabar Inn, which with the addition of the furniture and fixtures generously purchased by Ralph Cobey from the former operator, will increase serving capacity. Mrs. Kunkle is a well-known and popular person in the food service field, and her excellent family-style dinners, served at the "Atmosphere" have attracted visitors from far and wide. These family-style dinners will be continued at Malabar Inn along with delicious home-baked bread, noodles, dessert, and all the trimmings. Mrs. Kunkle will, as requested in advance, prepare box lunches for farm-tour visitors with limited time. Full course, family-style dinners will range in price from $2.50 to $3.00 and box lunches from $1.00 up. Reservations are requested. (Short, 1965, no. 67).

This newsletter also mentioned that "Ralph Cobey, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, who suffered a coronary last November, has now recovered and is able to resume his duties" (Short, 1965, no 67). It is not known what "compelling reasons" kept the newsletters from being published in 1965, although a letter from A. W. Short to Ralph Cobey dated June 10, 1965 seems to suggest that perhaps the newsletters were actually written:

> Someone still has the Feb. March, April, and May Newsletters in Galion. Many people have written and called, "why haven't we received any Newsletters for four months", I don't know what to tell them, I need help on such questions. Dr. Forman's memory is terrible, I had a conference with him for two hours last Friday night and talked with him Tuesday and he vaguely remembers bits of decisions and none of 99% of what we discussed relative to the Conference. (Short, 1965).

No newsletters were published between June and December. The December 1965 newsletter was signed "Secretary" and gave this explanation for the lack of newsletters:

> Director A. W. Short has been confined to the hospital for several weeks but we are glad to report he is improving and it is anticipated he may be returning to his home at 1477 Wyandot Road, Columbus 12, Ohio, for the holidays. Apologies for all the missing issues of the News Letter, however, due to changes in preparation and production methods, in addition to overtaxed schedules, we

> missed. Every effort will be made to have the issues reach you more promptly, and frankly, we are very pleased that you have let us know that you missed the News Letters. (Secretary, 1965, no. 69).

Although this newsletter leaves the impression that newsletters would be sent out on a much more regular basis in 1966, in reality no newsletters were sent out at all until April of 1969. Members of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation appear to have received no news at all for three entire years, 1966-1968. This alarmed at least one Foundation member, Ray H. Mattingley, who sent a letter to the Foundation on August 23, 1966, mentioning that, "A year ago I took out a membership in the Foundation while visiting there. Since that time (August 1965) I have received not a single piece of correspondence, newsletter, or anything else from the Foundation. I find this rather alarming—and feel that I deserve some explanation" (Mattingley, 1966). In a letter to Ernest E. Wooden, dated December 9, 1966, A. W. Short gave this explanation for the lack of newsletters:

> Your note written on your renewed membership #1387 was not out of context at all, and deserves an honest appraisal as to why we have been diverting what income we get to causes other than the expense of news letters until the tides financially change. We spent a lot this year for new brochures alone for advertising to get crowds to visit Malabar. Therefore, I will give you the encouraging news first. Malabar is receiving more than her share of radio, newspaper, and T. V. coverage not only in Ohio, but in other states.
>
> The number of people visiting the farm, going through the Bromfield home, patronizing the gift shop, taking a wagon tour of the farm on Sunday, and eating at the Malabar Inn all are on the increase over last year. Those at the helm have been having it rather rugged. (not complaining)
>
> Mr. Cobey, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, had a serious heart attack in the fall of 1964 and is now in the hospital again. E. R. (Butter) Howard, another beloved Board Member, had a sudden heart attack in August 1964 in Seattle, on his way home from California and died instantly. Dr. Jonathan Forman, the third member of the Board of Trustees, had a heart attack about a year ago and seems to be improved.
>
> Your Director (myself) was given three months to live Feb. 16, 1966. I underwent one of the famous heart surgery operations at the Cleveland Clinic March 11—coming along OK, returned to work May 11th for which I am truly grateful.
>
> We have been forced to not put out the newsletter on a regular schedule basis for a while because money is of the essence for so many other pertinent needs in connection with expenses, repairs, expansion of silo, larger milk bulk tank, machinery needs, etc. We hope to return to a regular schedule when we get our heads above the water, financially speaking. (Short, 1966).

The publicity articles that Short refers to in this letter mentioned nothing about the financial struggles facing Malabar Farm. One, published in an Ohio Department of Natural

Resources publication in May 1966, said that "Malabar Farm is one of the best demonstrations of the type of conservation practice which utilizes every acre of the land to the utmost, for the good of the land and the good of the people…Today the foundation has continued and expanded these policies through its Agricultural Board, which works in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service and other groups" (ODNR, 1966). This article listed some benefits of membership in the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation (which, incidentally, did not include a monthly newsletter), and gave a very positive impression that Malabar was still continuing the conservation legacy of Louis Bromfield. Yet an article in the *Mansfield News Journal*, dated January 12, 1968, suggests that Malabar Farm had been neglected throughout much of the decade of the 1960s. The reporter interviewed Louis Lamoreux, the architect who had designed and built Louis Bromfield's Big House:

> Lamoreux said he was "cognizant of the fact that when the place was sold, it was purchased lock, stock and barrel. We are not critical," he said, "But just ill at ease, and often, as the late owner, just plain lonesome….With Bromfield's consent, the original house was painted a warm grey as was so common in those days with people of discernment. The multitude of detailed, early Western Reserve trim was all painted white, and through the construction," Lamoreux said, "It simply sang and pleased the owner. Now they (details) are almost lost in a poorly maintained drab of white," Lamoreux said. With irritation tinging his words, Lamoreux talked also of a barn door mural that no longer exists, and about the moving of the beds belonging to Bromfield and George Hawkins. (Smith, 1968).

Lamoreux blamed the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation for removing Bromfield's bed, which had been built into the wall in his study, and for painting over the barn mural on the door of the main barn which Bromfield had ordered painted soon after he purchased Malabar. An article published soon afterwards quoted Mrs. Emma Byerly, the housekeeper who had cleaned the home from 1944-1959 and since 1966. She said that Bromfield had ordered his bed removed shortly before he died and that the barn doors had to be replaced but the murals could not be because of lack of funds (Wynn, 1968).

The Malabar Farm Newsletter was revived in 1969, with a new numbering system beginning in April 1969. These newsletters were edited by Harold Friar, the Assistant Director of the Foundation who taught Biology at Galion High School and "works at Malabar on weekends as well as through the summer" (Friar, 1969, no. 1). Friar's newsletters contained more real news about Malabar than those of A. W. Short. He mentioned a graduate student from Ohio State doing a doctoral dissertation on Bromfield's unpublished plays, and that all five of Bromfield's farm books were out of print (Friar, 1969, no. 3). In 1969, the gift shop was moved to the garage of the Big House, a heavy rainfall event in August washed out part of the roadway, which was quickly repaired, and Ellen Geld visited Malabar (Friar, 1969, nos. 4-8). Most of the newsletters for 1970 are historical descriptions about events that happened at Malabar during Bromfield's time. The November 1970 newsletter mentioned that Polly Kunkle was still

operating the Malabar Inn Restaurant (Friar, 1970, no. 20). This was the last newsletter published by the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation, most likely because of financial difficulties. In March, 1971, Ralph Cobey announced that Malabar Farm had been renamed as the Bromfield Ecology and Environmental Center (Decker, 1971), and denied that the financial struggles were anything to worry about:

> The ecology field is vibrating and we have our finger on the key people," explained Ralph Cobey, chairman of the board of the newly renamed Bromfield Ecology and Environmental Center. What has previously been known as the working Malabar Farm and the Louis Bromfield memorial will still be all these, but more, as the center seeks to widen its scope and influence…Cobey summed up the potential by stressing the need. "There is no ecology center like Malabar Farm anywhere, and we have not been able to do the things we would like to—so that's not saying much."…
>
> The center doesn't have the funds necessary yet but there is still hope. Both Cobey and Ray Smith, the resident farmer, feel an increase in the herd which could take place with a new barn would put the farm on a more secure financial footing. Which brings up the rumors which seem to fly annually, like birds going south, that Malabar Farm is to be sold. "No, no, no," said Cobey firmly. "We have a mortgage, sure, but our assets are worth three times what we owe."
>
> Cobey attributes the rumors to "a lack of good will from Mansfielders," adding "Mansfield has sort of treated us like an orphan." He expressed a weariness with "small people who belittle Bromfield." The famed author is more respected today than he was when he was alive because people are now talking what Bromfield wrote, Cobey said. He added that royalties on Bromfield's paperback books still bring in around $35,000 a year. And Malabar Farm draws over 20,000 visitors annually, Cobey says. Busloads of tourists, thousands of school children, big men in large corporations, leaders of foreign governments, and many others come to the center each year.
>
> Carmen Strickland, secretary of the board and guide for many of the visitors, has been at Malabar for 7 years, and "It has improved every year," she says. It has been four years since the house was painted, she admits, but it will be painted this year. Most of the Big House is just as it was when Bromfield left there, and every room is open to the public. The Bromfield Ecology and Environmental Center has a lot to offer, Cobey said. Memberships to the center are held in 14 countries. "Bromfield died a poor man, sure, but he left a great legacy, fitting for such a kind and tremendous person," Cobey concluded. (Decker, 1971).

Considering the fact that Ralph Cobey was a businessman, it is unlikely that he was really unaware of the serious financial straits that Malabar was in; for some reason he just did not want to public to know. He mentions in this article that their assets to liabilities ratio is only 3 to 1 now; nine years previous, in 1962, he had stated it as 8 to 1. What he did not mention was that not a cent of the mortgage had yet been repaid to the Noble Foundation, the interest on the loan had increased the original $140,000 mortgage to a quarter of a million dollars, and that the Noble

Foundation would soon foreclose on the mortgage. Once again, the future of Malabar Farm was in jeopardy—and the fate of what had once been "the most famous farm in the world" depended on what the Noble Foundation decided to do after they foreclosed on the farm.

A New Beginning: The State Takes Over Malabar Farm, 1972

By the end of 1971, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation could no longer hide its real financial situation from the public. Although as late as March of 1971 Ralph Cobey had said, "No, no, no," when asked if the farm would be sold (Decker, 1971), it had finally become apparent that the Noble Foundation would be forced to foreclose. By the end of 1971 Mansfield residents became aware of the true situation at Malabar, even if they had suspected it already. An article in the *Mansfield News Journal*, dated September 29, 1971, explained the situation:

> It is wholly understandable that the Noble Foundation should take action to foreclose its mortgage on Malabar Farm as it has received no payments on either principal or interest from the Malabar Farm Foundation which acquired title to the property in 1958. The farm foundation has since changed its name to Bromfield Ecology and Environmental Center. Recent federal law has put all charitable foundations under strict scrutiny as to their handling of assets and the disbursement of their earnings. Even though the Noble Foundation is totally satisfied with the way Malabar Farm has been maintained and operated by its owners, a failure to meet the obligations to Noble and to Ralph Cobey of Galion, whose note for $15,000 was secured by the mortgage, cannot continue to be overlooked indefinitely…
>
> While there has been criticism from time to time of the way the Malabar Farm Foundation handled the property legacy of the late author Louis Bromfield, it must be said that no one else came forward with any concrete proposal to manage the operation any better. Nobody else would put their dollars where their words were. The Malabar Farm Foundation did. Even if it should turn out that this was not entirely eleemosynary, yet the Bromfield home has been preserved in a semblance of what it was like when its owner attracted attention from all over the world for his fiction and his writings on ecology. Having shown such constructive interest in the past, it seems unlikely the Noble Foundation will merely put the internationally known farm up for grabs. In fact, John March, its president, said the Noble Foundation "would take over the farm properly if the foreclosure action is successful." That, it seems to us, would leave Malabar in excellent hands. ("Malabar's future", 1971).

The problem was that the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation had been delinquent on the loan from the beginning. The original loan from the Noble Foundation was supposed to have been repaid in ten years, by 1966, but in 1972 "not a cent had been returned. Only now, 16 years later, with a nudge from the Federal Government and the tax reform law of 1969, is Noble beginning to press for the money. A 4 per cent interest rate on the principal and associated outstanding bills push the farm's total indebtedness past the quarter-million-dollar mark, after 6 years of delinquency" (Walton, 1972). Ralph Cobey still held a $15,000 mortgage on the farm as well and offered the Noble Foundation $100,000 to buy their portion of the mortgage, but they turned down his offer (Walton, 1972). It seems that the Noble Foundation

had finally grown tired of Ralph Cobey, as Ollie Fink had hoped more than ten years previously would happen. Considering that Cobey had been the head of the Board of Trustees and had not paid back any of the loan to the Noble Foundation, it is actually surprising that they put up with him as long as they did.

A. W. Short had retired as the farm director in 1971 because of his heart condition. He said that, "Yes, I'm aware that the farm is broke, but I never talk about the problem unless somebody asks me about it. It's too depressing" (Walton, 1972). The new vice president of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation and former Ohio Secretary of Agriculture, Robert H. Terhune, was honest about the problem but a little more hopeful, hoping to get local support for the farm and make it a community project, which would qualify it for a Farm Home Administrative loan (Hanusz, 1972). Terhune was quoted as saying, "'We don't have much time and right now we are out begging. The vultures are all over, waiting for us to fold'…Right now, what the farm needs, besides visitors, is manpower and help—and it is this help, Terhune feels, that could transform a neglected monument to agriculture and ecology into a viable, interesting and educational institution. 'But we need it now. There isn't much time,' he said" (Hanusz, 1972).

Mrs. Carmen Stricklen, office manager of the farm, was quoted in the Toledo *Blade* as saying, "'If Malabar closes, I'll just be sick.'…Her manner becomes overtly evangelistic when she speaks of Bromfield…She never knew Mr. Bromfield when he was alive, but her devotion to the man and his work borders on the fanatical. She does not rule out the possibility of sitting down in front of the bulldozers that one day may move menacingly toward the elegant 31-room farmhouse. 'Louis was just the greatest man that ever lived. He was preaching about the danger of pollution 25 years ago when nobody would listen. His spirit is still in his house. I consider myself home when I'm here'" (Walton, 1972). This article also mentioned that, "At first the Malabar Farm Foundation was not too eager to have the farm's plight known, but now it has been decided that the more who know of it, the better the chance that an eleventh hour benefactor will come forward" (Walton, 1972). It was indeed the eleventh hour before they finally made their financial situation public, considering that they had not paid off any of the mortgage in 16 years.

One group of people who tried to save Malabar in April of 1972 was a group of students at Kent State University. They felt that the best way to preserve Malabar was to have it made a National Park, and created an ad hoc "Committee to Save Malabar." This committee sent out petitions to put Malabar Farm into national trust and asked people to write letters "to your congressmen, senators, the governor, Mr. Nye, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton, whomever you can think of, and to friends all over the country asking them to do the same. A deluge of letters from all over the United States would impress the federal and state governments" (Kent State Students, 1972). They also passed a bill in the Student Senate of Kent State University "to provide immediate support for the preservation of Malabar Farm by its inclusion into the national trust" (Student Senate, 1972):

> The world that Louis Bromfield lived in and represents to us today is endangered. Malabar Farm, the unique 600 acre example of natural ecology, could die August 1 and be replaced by real estate developments. Houses could destroy the best natural farm ecology there is in Ohio. The untouched beauty of this farmland *must* not become a concrete graveyard…The action we see as necessary and immediate is to put Malabar Farm into national trust. We know the state of Ohio cannot afford to save the land, the federal government must make Malabar Farm a national park, national monument or some other national area. Washington must help preserve Malabar for future generations. If not, Bromfield's dream that "One day our soil and our forests from one end of the country to the other will be well managed" will be crushed beneath the bulldozers and bricklayers of a blind society. (Student Senate, 1972).

Unfortunately, according to the *Blade* article, "such procedures take two years and longer, and Malabar doesn't have that kind of time." The State of Ohio was interested in the farm, but did not have the budget to buy it and pay off the over $200,000 mortgage—although they did say that if the Noble Foundation were to donate it, "We would jump at it. We'd find a way, somehow, to staff it and operate it, probably as something akin to a state park" (Walton, 1972). Ultimately, the fate of Malabar Farm was in the hands of the Noble Foundation, as explained in this May 14, 1972 article in the Toledo *Blade*:

> John March, president of the Noble Foundation, already acknowledges that there is little choice except foreclosure. Just what the foundation will do after foreclosure has not been decided, but Noble is aware of the spirit in which the original loan was made, and outright donation of the farm remains a possibility. "We don't want to be painted as a bunch of villains out here," Mr. March said. "Our foundation is active in cancer research, so whether you are talking about agriculture or human life, we're all involved in conservation." If the foundation forecloses and then gives Malabar away, it will be "for the good of the people of Ohio, and not to some private group. If the decision is made to sell, land developers probably will not get first crack at the farm," Mr. March added in a ray of hope for Bromfield fans. "We would be very surprised if the board decides to turn it over to real estate developers."
>
> Indeed, the foundation already has rejected one offer from a Chicago real estate firm of $1,000 for each of the farm's 600 acres…Malabar's fate will be decided in a board room 800 miles away in a few weeks. Should the news not be good, this summer could be the last for those who would visit to gaze at the house that Bromfield built, with its 9 bedrooms, its 8 ½ bathrooms; its imported French wallpaper; its pair of Grandma Moses originals, and its "Honeymoon" room, where the late Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall spent their wedding night after their marriage in the Malabar rose garden. (Walton, 1972).

Fortunately, the Noble Foundation did not decide to turn the land over to developers. It had been wise of Friends of the Land to get their original loan from Noble rather than from someone else, because the Noble Foundation had similar soil conservation interests to Friends of

the Land. Moreover, Louis Bromfield had been close friends with Lloyd Noble, the wealthy Oklahoma oil man who founded the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in 1945 in honor of his father (Scott, 1998, p. 492). The leaders of the Noble Foundation honored this history and their own interest in conservation by choosing not to sell Malabar to developers. To satisfy federal tax laws, they foreclosed the property—and then donated Malabar Farm to the State of Ohio in 1972. In this way the State was able to take the farm without having to pay off the mortgage, and the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation finally relinquished ownership and operation of the farm. For the first time since Louis Bromfield's death in 1956, Malabar Farm was finally free from debt:

> The future of Malabar Farm as an ecological center is now assured. The vision which inspired Louis Bromfield as he acquired and developed the rolling acreage near Lucas and which he left as a heritage to the world—that vision now will flourish and be enhanced. In a most responsible series of actions the Malabar Farm Foundation released the title to both the land and the important chattels at Malabar. These chattels include not only farm equipment and valuable house furniture, collected by Bromfield and his wife Mary from around the world, but also some of the author's personal mementoes and manuscripts. The land now transfers to the Noble Foundation, which held a long overdue mortgage on the property, and then to the state of Ohio as a gift. The chattels go directly to state ownership but will remain at the farm where the mementoes of Bromfield's career will stay in the setting he created. The importance of the arrangement is that funds will now be available to adequately maintain and further develop the farm as a public enterprise. ("New tomorrows", 1972).

C. J. (Bill) Solomon, the friend of Louis Bromfield who had been worked so hard to preserve Malabar but had been kept off the Board of Trustees by Ralph Cobey for 14 years, was selected to become the first curator of Malabar Farm under State control (Heydinger, c. 1972). The State had plans for Malabar Farm which, for the first time since Bromfield's death, could actually be carried out: "'Our principal objective will be to preserve the legacy of Louis Bromfield's contribution to Ohio history,' the governor said. 'But we would also hope that we could provide the family visiting Malabar Farm with an exposure to ecology and the sound farming practices. As Ohio becomes more and more urbanized, fewer children—and young parents as well—have any real first-hand knowledge of farming and what it means to be on a farm. We want a visit to Malabar to provide such knowledge'" (Stanfield, 1972).

There was some controversy in the first few years as to what exactly Malabar Farm State Park should be. Certainly, a lot of maintenance work was required to bring the farm back to where it had been in Bromfield's day: "The dairy, once the finest in Richland County, was rated as Grade B. The crops lay unharvested in the field. The thick hedges that squared off the fields had been ignored until they threatened to overgrow the entire area. The foundations of the barns were crumbling. All the outbuildings needed painting" (Thomas, 1972). Beyond the immediate upkeep of the fields and buildings, however, there was the question of what else should be done

with Malabar now that sufficient funds were finally available. Different plans for development as a recreational facility were proposed; one of the most intensive included a winter sports area on Mount Jeez, two outdoor theaters, damming Switzer's Creek to make a 20-acre lake, a trout hatchery, and a farm museum (Heydinger, c. 1972).

A "Governor's Advisory Committee" was formed to make suggestions about how Malabar Farm should be run. Dr. M. L. Ferguson of Kent State University, who was on this committee, thought that the plan was too focused on farming operations and recreation and neglected education (Stanfield, c. 1973). Dr. Ferguson felt that, "We must consider whether the people will still be interested in coming here 50 or 100 years from now," and that maintaining the farm as a monument to Bromfield should be first priority (Stanfield, c. 1972). The State Department of Agriculture, however, "would like to see Malabar as an example of efficient farming and show signs of paying its own way" (Stanfield, c. 1972). The goal was to make the dairy operation self-sustaining financially, and by September of 1972 it was already back up to Grade A status (Thomas, 1972).

Not every change the State made to Malabar was positive. The water from the big spring near the Malabar Inn was "declared unsafe for drinking by health officials. A sign to that effect will be posted at the spring. Malabar spokesmen said many persons have been drinking form the spring without apparent harm. The health department tests showed a higher bacterial count than is considered safe for drinking water" ("Museum suggested", 1974). The effort to make Malabar a profitable modern dairy farm took precedence over preserving Bromfield's legacy when the State destroyed Bromfield's famous trench silo to erect a tower silo:

> The rumbling sound of a bulldozer near the Big House at Malabar Farm yesterday served as an example of changes which are coming to the farm of the late author and conservationist Louis Bromfield…The workmen's job was to fill in a trench silo built by Bromfield in 1946. The trench silo will be replaced by a regular tower silo. This decision to fill in the trench silo and build a tower on the site was made by the Ohio Department of Agriculture, which now administers farming operations at the state-owned Malabar Farm.
>
> Gene R. Abercrombie, Director of the Agricultural Department, said…one side of the 130-foot long trench silo was completely caved in. He also explained water was running down a slope into the silo, located near the main house at Malabar. A tower silo will now be built on the site at a cost of something less than $10,000, Abercrombie said. The workmen also demolished an old tower silo near the Big House, which was on the farm when Bromfield purchased it and had not been used for years.
>
> C. J. (Bill) Solomon, curator of Malabar Farm, said he was sorry the state decided to terminate Bromfield's trench silo and build a tower silo. "It was as much a part of Malabar as the Malabar name itself," Solomon said. Abercrombie said doing away with the trench silo "won't change the appearance of anything." (Kenyon, 1972).

In general, however, most of the changes made under government ownership were for the best. Badly-needed repairs were made to the buildings, and many abandoned acres of land were brought back into production (Stanfield, c. 1973). The Big House remained open to the public, with "20 guides on hand to take tourists through the place" (Bongartz, 1974). Included in the transfer of property to the State was the Malabar Inn, still operated by Polly Kunkle at the time of transfer (Stanfield, 1972). In 1974, she was still operating the restaurant and selling "home-made bread, Amish baked chicken, home-made noodles and grasshopper pie" (Bongartz, 1974). The flower gardens and rail fences were restored and new rest room facilities installed (Stanfield, 1975, May 11). Bromfield's papers and books were sorted and organized, some for the first time since his death (Stanfield, 1975, March 16). These papers later became the Louis Bromfield Collection, which is currently housed at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

Perhaps the way the State operated Malabar was not perfect, but it was much better than any other alternative. Even if the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation had not been indebted with the mortgage on the farm, they may still have not had enough money to manage the farm well or keep up the buildings. By becoming a state park, funds were guaranteed to preserve Malabar Farm and to keep the Big House and its furnishings intact as a monument to Louis Bromfield. Today, Malabar Farm remains an Ohio State Park, a lasting tribute to Louis Bromfield and the soil conservation that he practiced—and it may be better today than it was even in 1972.

Preserving Bromfield's Legacy: Malabar Farm State Park Today and Tomorrow

Malabar Farm has remained an Ohio State Park since 1972 and is currently managed by Korre Boyer, who has a degree from The Ohio State University in Agricultural Education, minor in production (Boyer, 2015). Korre was the first park manager who had been hired from outside the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in thirty years, and he says that previous park managers had been "great at running campgrounds, maintaining trails, what you would traditionally think of in state parks," but not necessarily very knowledgeable about farming. When he took over the farm, the fields had been managed by prison labor for several years and were in pretty bad shape. Korre said that three years ago there was so much marestail in the fields that people asked what crop was growing and he had to tell them that it was actually a weed. In the past three years, the fields have been improved, although it will take more work to get them into as good of shape as they were in Bromfield's day. One issue Korre faced with the farm workers was that because they are state employees they are all unionized and so they would leave work at 5:00, even if they were baling hay and it was going to rain later that night. He said that the workers are starting to get more interested in the farm itself, which has helped.

The Big House at Malabar is looking better than it probably has since the 1940s (Figure 43). One of the first major projects under Korre's management was to restore the exterior of the Big House, which he said was within 10 years of "being past the point of no return" (Figure 44). Korre said that, "Until we got the buildings in order, there wasn't much sense in doing too many other things. Without the Big House, Malabar doesn't exist. As we prioritize things, saving buildings is a big thing to preserve the farm, make it a place where people want to come" (Boyer, 2015). The Big House still has all its original furnishings, wallpaper, and carpeting. Visitors to Malabar can still see the double red-carpeted staircases leading up to the second floor from the main entryway, the "Honeymoon Room" where Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall spent their wedding night in 1945 (Figure 45), two original Grandma Moses paintings, and the big desk in Bromfield's study that he never actually used for writing because it was too high (Figure 46). Some of the original doors that were chewed up by Bromfield's Boxer dogs are still there, although some of them were replaced before the workmen realized that the damage to the doors was historic (Bachelder, 2015). Louis Lamoreux would have been pleased to know that a ¾-scale replica of Bromfield's bed has been returned to his study, along with a dog bed and a stuffed Boxer dog (Figure 47).

All of the buildings near the Big House are still original, with the exception of the main dairy barn. A dairy has not been operated at Malabar since 1991, and the main barn burned in a 1993 fire. It was rebuilt to look as much like the original as possible and still meet modern building codes (Figure 48). The main doors of the barn are again decorated with a barn mural that looks almost exactly like the original, carefully painted by Malabar historian (and artist) Tom Bachelder (Bachelder, 2015) (Figure 49). There is still a beef cattle operation at Malabar, but the cattle are kept in another barn on what Bromfield called the Fleming Place, not right by the Big House. A few assorted goats, sheep, and miniature horses are kept in the barns by the

Big House for visitors to see and pet. The octagonal brick smokehouse is still there (Figure 50), and so is the 1970's tower silo that the State built after they tore down Bromfield's original trench silo. Ironically, the "new" silo is no longer in use, and many dairy farmers today still use trench silos because they are easier to fill and manage than tower silos. The only major new building is a visitor center a little ways away from the Big House, constructed in 2006 and now housing the gift shop, interactive displays, and some of the books from the ecologic library.

Bromfield's "roadside market to end all roadside markets" is still there and cold, crystal-clear water still flows from the big spring through the sandstone troughs (Figures 51-52). Currently, the state does not grow vegetables to sell, and if they do the Health Department will not allow the produce to touch the spring water because they are concerned about bacteria, despite the fact that people have been drinking the spring water for years and no one has ever gotten sick from it. Next to the big spring, the historic brick inn, recently remodeled, is now the "Malabar Farm Restaurant" and still serves homemade bread, homemade noodles, beef raised at Malabar, and food made with as many local, seasonal ingredients as possible (Figure 53). The building to store excess produce that Bromfield built across Pleasant Valley Road from the vegetable stand is still there, as is the "hay-drying barn" that Bromfield wrote about so enthusiastically in *From My Experience* but which did not actually work. It was really a tobacco-drying barn.

Maple syrup is still produced at Malabar and sold in the gift shop. The sugar maple trees are tapped the modern way, with plastic tubing, and the sap is boiled down in the maple sugaring shack in evaporators over a wood fire. The cabins originally owned by Jim and Georgia Pugh are now part of the state park as well (Figure 54). The Ceely Rose house (where Ceely Rose murdered her entire family long before Bromfield bought the land) is still there (Figure 55). The "mail order house" which Bromfield lived in (and hated) while the Big House was being built is now operated as a hostel (Figure 56). The little cemetery where the Schrack family and Louis and Mary Bromfield are buried is still owned by the township, but maintained by the state (Figure 57).

The fields at Malabar are still laid out in the contours that Bromfield created (Figure 58). Hay is grown for the beef cattle operation and corn is grown and sold to Loudonville Farmer's Equity, a local co-op (Figure 59). The cattle are kept in a feedlot during the winter and pastured in the summer; Mount Jeez, which still affords a spectacular view of the entire farm, is used for pasturing the cattle (Figures 60-61). The farming operation is managed according to currently accepted best management practices. Park manager Korre Boyer believes that this is a better way to carry out the legacy of Louis Bromfield than to keep managing it exactly as he did in the 1950s:

> A couple hundred thousand people come to Malabar each year. For 80-85%, this is the only agricultural experience they are going to get. We are portraying what modern agriculture is, what a farm is, what it should look like. We also look at the farm operation from the standpoint, "If Louis Bromfield were alive today,

how would he be farming?" In 1950 he was seen as an innovator, so do you think he would still be farming the same way in 2015? (Boyer, 2015).

Korre's goals for the future include a greater emphasis on education, once the buildings are restored and the fields are brought back to productivity. He hopes eventually to get more involved with colleges and universities and to place more emphasis on outreach, once the farm is functioning well enough to be a good agricultural education tool. He said that, "With the prison farming this place for so many years, this isn't the kind of place I want to show people. It's nice where we are at right now; you can see where we have been, where we are today. Come back in three years and see" (Boyer, 2015).

Figure 43: The Big House at Malabar. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 44: Close-up of the Big House, showing the newly-restored exterior. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 45: The "Honeymoon Room" where Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall were married in 1945. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 46: The desk in Louis Bromfield's study. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 47: Replica of Louis Bromfield's bed. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 48: The main barn at Malabar, rebuilt after a 1993 fire. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 49: Barn mural on the main barn, repainted by Tom Bachelder. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 50: The octagonal brick smokehouse, constructed by Louis Lamaroux. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 51: Bromfield's "roadside market to end all roadside markets." Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.


Figure 52: Crystal-clear spring water still flows in the stone troughs. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 53: The Malabar Farm Restaurant. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.


Figure 54: The upper Pugh cabin. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 55: The Ceely Rose house. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 56: The "mail-order" house, now operated as a hostel. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 57: Louis Bromfield's grave. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 58: Contoured field at Malabar. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 59: Hay for the Malabar cattle. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 7, 2015.

Figure 60: Mount Jeez. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Figure 61: The view of Malabar Farm from Mount Jeez. Photo by Anneliese Abbott, July 6, 2015.

Why Did Malabar Farm Always Struggle Financially?

Perhaps one of the most important questions that we can ask about Malabar Farm is why its operators were always beset with financial difficulties. After all, if the soil conservation practices that Bromfield implemented were sound, why did the farm struggle so much financially until it was foreclosed by the Noble Foundation? Why did Bromfield die with so little money that he sold his timber to a lumber company to pay his hospital bills? Why was Friends of the Land never able to establish their Louis Bromfield Institute? Were all these financial difficulties because of the farming methods used in Malabar, or in spite of them? Far from being irrelevant, these questions are extremely important today. Conservation farming is still critically important, but who could convince farmers to practice conservation if even the famous Malabar Farm could not stay financially afloat? The purpose of this section, then, is to look more closely at the reasons for Malabar's decline and how these lessons can be applied today.

Whether knowingly or not, the seeds of Malabar's decline were sowed by its founder, Louis Bromfield himself. Bromfield was one of the few fortunate individuals who made a fortune as a writer, and he grew accustomed to a lavish lifestyle to match his income. Perhaps because he had been somewhat poor as a child, Bromfield abhorred all kinds of thrift and frugality. His account in *The Farm* of how his family lived when they had money is quite an apt description of Bromfield's own lifestyle, if nothing else:

> Because every piece of land and every house which Johnny's father possessed had been sold to begin all over again at the Farm, there was cash in the bank and the moment there was cash in the bank all the family, even Johnny's mother, was always seized by the delusion that the mere existence of cash made it inexhaustible…And then suddenly the money seemed to come to an end. No one noticed that the account had been shrinking until there wasn't any more, and there were still bills to be paid for work that already had been done. (Bromfield, 1933, p. 304).

Even though Bromfield seems to have realized that he had this tendency to over-spend money, he does not seem to have been able to control what he considered to be a family shortcoming. He was a generous man and never charged a penny's admission to the thousands of visitors who flocked to Malabar Farm every year, even those whom he fed and housed for weeks at a time. At first, Malabar Farm did not make enough money to be self-supporting and was kept running by part of Bromfield's writing income. It seems that Malabar may have been almost financially stable by 1950 or 1952; at least, Bromfield's grass farming methods of raising cattle were capable of being profitable. In a "bulletin" written to his farm workers in 1952, Bromfield vented his frustration at the "leaks and waste" that he thought were keeping Malabar from making a profit:

> In the past we have done together a first rate job in two fields (1) soil conservation (2) crop production. In these two fields we can only go on getting

> better and better. We are now ready for the third stage which is efficiency and top-notch organization…In the past our biggest faults have been sloppiness, leaks which cost many hundreds of dollars a year, and not very efficient organization of labor, which of course comes under the head of sloppiness…Very often two or three men are standing around watching a couple of others working…In the past there has been a tendency to leave all kinds of rubbish just where it falls, not only in the barns but in the fields…We have lost two or three good cows from udder injuries just because of this…There must be better maintenance of machinery. That is, machinery must be checked regularly and *kept* in condition rather than waiting until a machine breaks down altogether…In two months this winter there were 1600 gallons of gasoline unaccounted for…Electric light bills are far out of line…We have lost some thousands of dollars in wheat, oats and barley last year because the ground was not properly fitted and because in the case of oats and barley the combine was not working properly and left half or more of the grain in the field…
>
> All of these things and many more come under the head of what I mean by leaks and waste. They added, as near as I can calculate to seven or eight thousand dollars during the past year in lost crops, broken machinery, electric light waste, cows and calves…As I have pointed out before, this is not the ordinary farm but one which has the eyes of the country and even the world on it. Every night one should be able to go anywhere and find everything in perfect shape…The farm has just about turned the corner and from here on out, we should show increasing profits each year. We would have had a sound profit this year but for leaks and waste…In the past for a number of years I have put large amounts of money into the farm and have guaranteed the security of everyone on the farm at about as high a living standard as exists anywhere in the world. In the future I am not prepared to do this. The farm can stand on its own and make a good and perhaps big profit provided we get organized in this third stage. (Bromfield, 1952, January).

It is ironic that Bromfield himself was guilty of many of these faults; he was known to leave lights on in the Big House waiting for guests to arrive at all hours of the night, and if the Big House was ever in "perfect shape" it was not because of Bromfield and his Boxer dogs! It seems from this tirade (which was 9 type-written pages!) that by 1952 Bromfield was beginning to get short on funds and that he blamed this on everyone except himself. He did not make as much money on writing after he founded Malabar as he had earlier in his career; part of the reason for this was because he was too preoccupied with the farm to write good novels, and part of it was that his writing style did not appeal to 1950's tastes as much as it had in the 1930s. This was not to say that he was not making any money; Ivan Scott calculates that he still had a net income from writing of about $47,000 a year when he died (Scott, 1998, p. 610). The problem was that he spent this money faster than he made it on both entertainment and farm expenses.

Could Malabar Farm have paid its own way? It seems that at least the grass-fed dairy operation could have made a profit, or at least broken even, if it had been operated efficiently.

Bromfield's farming practices were sound and in today's economy, he would probably be able to get a premium price per gallon for his milk from grass-fed cows. Unfortunately, he chose to start Malabar at the time in US agricultural history when farmers were making narrower and narrower profits on the crops that they produced, making it difficult to make a profit in farming at all without the most efficient system possible. It would probably have been possible for Bromfield's family and farm workers to live on the earnings from the farm if they had been content to live a comfortable but modest lifestyle. The problem was that Bromfield wanted the farm to make so much profit that he and everyone else at Malabar could live an extravagant lifestyle, which was probably not possible for any farming operation in the 1950s.

It does not seem that Louis Bromfield, Friends of the Land, or any of these early conservationists fully understood the direction that agriculture was heading after World War II. They rightly welcomed better farming practices that would conserve the precious soil for future generations, and initially assumed that all developments in agriculture were good. Along with conservation tillage came a host of pesticides and larger, more efficient, and more expensive machinery that could only make a profit on a large scale. Legitimate concerns about the safety and purity of milk eventually resulted in dairy laws so strict that only huge operations could comply, driving small and even medium-sized farmers out of business. It was the transition from farming to agribusiness, and at that time there was no way to foresee that someday this would lead to a society where 98% of the population would be ignorant of how their food was produced. Perhaps it was Bromfield's lavish lifestyle that kept Malabar from ever becoming profitable; perhaps it was just a symptom of the overall changes that were sweeping agriculture at the time. Most likely it was a little of both.

Since even Louis Bromfield failed to make a large profit from farming operations at Malabar, it is not surprising that Friends of the Land and the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation were unable to fund their originally proposed education plan by the sale of farm products. Considering that most of the leaders of Friends of the Land were businessmen, however, it does seem a little strange that they were never able to look at Malabar's financial situation realistically. Many leaders of Friends of the Land seemed to believe that because their organization had good goals, it would always be successful and the money to fund the conservation effort would always appear. Unfortunately, this faith was often ungrounded, as evidenced by the financial difficulties that plagued the organization from the very beginning. It is difficult to understand why Friends of the Land was so hesitant to raise society dues to keep up with inflation, because this would seem like the easiest way for them to have remained financially solvent. If they had raised their dues to $10 in 1953 and kept most of the 5000 members they had at that time, they could have continued to publish *The Land* while collecting an additional $25,000 a year which they could have used for educational outreach and later to purchase Malabar.

Even the way Friends of the Land handled the fundraising campaign to purchase Malabar makes little sense from a business point of view. They invested a huge amount of money in a largely unsuccessful campaign, and used what little money they did raise for maintenance rather

than to pay off the loan. Ollie Fink blamed Ralph Cobey for this in his letter to the Friends of the Land Board of Directors and seemed to think that they could have put down more than half of the money necessary to purchase Malabar if Cobey had not mismanaged funds:

> Friends of the Land secured in gifts, largely from our members, more than $50,000, and an additional $4,000, in a fund raising effort. This was spent for Malabar Farm programs and maintenance or transferred to the Foundation account—mainly by Mr. Cobey and his committee. In addition to this there was a farm income of another $30,000, which they spent. In addition to these accounts, the Executive Secretary and the National office staff contributed three fourths of their efforts for about two years to the saving of Malabar Farm. Much of the Quarterly, LAND & WATER was used to sell the program. These latter two items—salaries of staff and publication of the Quarterly, represented another $15,000 to $20,000. All of these items we find totaled more than $100,000 spent to help Malabar and $75,000 of this from non-farm sources. (Fink, c. 1959).

Ralph Cobey is certainly an enigma, and it is difficult to determine exactly why he acted the way he did at Malabar. Fink, Solomon, and almost everyone except Dr. Forman thought that Cobey just wanted to advance his own personal prestige and sell his farm machinery and that he did not care much about Bromfield's ideals or using Malabar for educational purposes. Cobey does not seem to have written much about his motives; it was Dr. Forman and others who defended him, not Cobey himself. Thus it is difficult to determine exactly why Cobey allowed Malabar Farm to gradually decline, failed to pay back the loan to the Noble Foundation, and apparently tried very hard to hide Malabar's indebtedness from the public. Everything published by the media about Cobey portrays him as the sole individual who kept Malabar going between Bromfield's death in 1956 and when the state took over in 1972. Here is some of the positive publicity that the *Mansfield News Journal* published about Cobey:

> Under the direction of Ralph Cobey, the chairman of the board of trustees…the farm is being operated profitably. ("No financial troubles", 1962). [This was published shortly after Dr. Chapman resigned in frustration at how the farm was being managed]

> The original mortgage on the farm's real estate was for $152,000, but unpaid interest on the loan has pushed the total to $244,000. Of that amount $24,000 is owed to Ralph Cobey of Galion, chairman of the Malabar Farm trustees who advanced the money to keep the farm going. (Stanfield, 1972).

> Ralph Cobey of Galion deserves great credit for the preservation of Malabar Farm through its financial vicissitudes. While others carped about what ought to be done, Cobey personally sponsored and oversaw the doing of what could be done. He also played a major role in arrangements which transferred the property to the state. ("New tomorrows", 1972).

These positive descriptions of Cobey are completely different from how Ollie Fink felt that Cobey was managing Malabar. Who was right? Was the decline of Malabar inevitable even though Cobey did his best to make the farm profitable, or was it the decisions made by Cobey that caused the farm to go into such decay? We will probably never know the whole truth, so it is difficult either to blame or acquit Cobey for what happened to Malabar—however, if the majority of witnesses are to be believed, he certainly played a role in its decline. The Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation certainly did not make good financial decisions, whether or not this was Cobey's fault. They were not consistent in sending out newsletters, even though a good newsletter would probably have increased the number of dues-paying members to the organization. They did not charge for any of their educational activities, not even when every 5th grader from the Mansfield public school system came to Malabar for a field trip. Thus they were always short on money, and it seemed to be the educational program that suffered the most.

Why did Malabar Farm lose its appeal to the public during the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation years? One reason may have been because the public was just not interested in agriculture during this time. However, that was probably not the real reason; after all, one of the biggest draws of Malabar ever since it has been operated by the State is that it gives city folks a chance to see a working farm. Certainly Malabar lost a lot of its appeal when Louis Bromfield died; he was what made it Malabar and not just another farm. The Big House was still there, however, with all its furnishings; had they placed more emphasis on Malabar's exciting history, it would perhaps have attracted more visitors who would gladly have paid a small admission fee. It appears that neither Friends of the Land nor the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation fully appreciated the historic potential of Malabar; they were more concerned with keeping it a profitable farm. One reason for this may be that people never tend to regard something as historic until it is at least 20 or 30 years old, so quite likely the historic draw of Malabar in the late 1950s and early 1960s was less than it was by 1972. Ironically, the lack of funds at Malabar probably helped preserve its historic aspect. Malabar today still looks almost exactly as it did in the 1940s; had Friends of the Land been able to form their Louis Bromfield Institute and constructed all the buildings they wanted to, Malabar would look more like a small college campus than the farm of Bromfield's day.

Another reason that Malabar did not appeal to the general public was probably because the operators were focusing so much on making it a profitable dairy farm that they were no longer experimenting with new ideas like Bromfield did. Dr. Chapman tried to experiment on a small scale in the garden with novel plants, but he does not seem to have had the opportunity to do any of the large-scale experiments that Bromfield was so famous for. After he resigned, no one at Malabar seemed to be interested in agricultural experiments at all. Farmers used to come to Malabar to see what Louis Bromfield was doing and learn new methods for their own farms; this aspect of Malabar seems to have been absent during the 1960s. It is difficult to determine exactly what was being done at Malabar during this time, but education does not seem to have been given a high priority.

One of the publicity articles published in an Ohio Department of Natural Resources publication in 1966 calls Malabar Farm "one of the best demonstrations of the type of conservation practice which utilizes every acre of land to the utmost" and states that "Conservation practices introduced by Bromfield and the foundation include, contour plowing, crop rotation, planting of multiflora rose hedges, pond construction, setting aside land for wildlife habitat and permanent pasture, soil experimentation and other ecological studies" (ODNR, 1966). However, these studies are not mentioned at all in any of the Malabar Farm newsletters or newspaper articles, so it is difficult to know how accessible they were to the public who visited Malabar. Member privileges listed in this article are limited to fishing in the ponds, free use of picnic areas, use of the ecological library, and discounts at the souvenir shop and Malabar Inn restaurant; members do not seem to have access to special programs on soil conservation, or indeed any educational resources other than the library.

It may be difficult to determine exactly why Malabar declined, or to distinguish what was a result of bad management and what was a result of changing times. I tend to think that poor management played a larger role than the time period, because other conservation or ecological organizations seemed to survive and even grow during this time. Certainly by 1962, when Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* and the American public began to think about pollution and environmental issues, there would have been interest in a solid educational program at Malabar. The Kalamazoo Nature Center in Kalamazoo, Michigan, was founded in 1960 with the mission of connecting people to nature and has survived and prospered to this day. With the Big House and Bromfield's legacy, it seems that Malabar was even better poised to become an effective organization, had its leadership set more realistic goals and managed their finances better. Interestingly enough, Malabar Farm State Park today is considered an "income-generating" state park, according to Korre Boyer—showing that it had the potential all along to make a profit with a combination of farm and educational income.

I would argue that probably the biggest reason why Bromfield, Friends of the Land, and the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation could not make Malabar as prosperous as they wanted it to be was because they were not being realistic about finances. The farm could have made a decent profit, but even the best conservation practices in the world could never have made enough extra money to fund either Bromfield's extravagant lifestyle or the ambitious educational programs envisioned by Friends of the Land. If the operators of Malabar had realized this and charged a small fee for educational programs and events, they could probably have kept Malabar financially solvent and repaid their loan to the Noble Foundation in a timely manner. They should have focused on repaying the loan before trying to expand the farming operation; there are many mentions of purchasing new farm machinery and equipment such as a new bulk tank in the dairy barn that could probably have waited a few years until the loan was paid off. By not paying back their loan, the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation showed that they could not handle finances well, which probably discouraged otherwise charitable donors from making contributions to the foundation.

It seems to me that the most important lesson we can learn from the financial struggles at Malabar is to count the cost before beginning a project. Everything at Malabar started out too big. It was certainly not wrong for Friends of the Land to have high goals when they first started, but they seem to have had a bad habit of doing things first and then checking later to see if they had the money. The Louis Bromfield Institute was a wonderful idea, but they should have focused first on owning Malabar Farm outright and then on gradually implementing their other ideas. They also seem to have lost a lot of perfectly legitimate income by not charging for educational programs. Although the idea of offering free educational programs seems noble and charitable, most people that would be interested in such programs are able and willing to pay a reasonable fee. Free programs can only work if they are subsidized by something else, and the farm income at Malabar was not sufficient for that purpose. If they had charged for educational programs, perhaps they could have used that income to increase the offering of educational programs and to hire more competent staff to teach them, which in turn would have attracted more visitors and generated more revenue.

I do believe, however, that the reason Friends of the Land failed at Malabar was not because their ideas were wrong. They were right about soil conservation and a host of other environmental issues that did not become apparent to the public for several more decades. Friends of the Land was ahead of their time, as was Louis Bromfield. They were one of the pioneering conservation organizations and were well-informed about issues that we are still debating today. Unfortunately, financial struggles and an aging leadership caused the organization to decline—but their surviving writings are just as relevant today as they were seventy years ago. In the next chapter I will highlight some of the issues that Friends of the Land was concerned about which we still debate today.

Conservation Then and Now

One of the most fascinating aspects about Friends of the Land and Louis Bromfield is that the literature they wrote is just as relevant today as in the 1940s and '50s. Some of the articles in *The Land* read like they could have been written yesterday, as they address current issues in our society. Perhaps one of the most important lessons to be gained from the history of Malabar Farm and Friends of the Land is that none of these issues are new. Seventy years ago, people were worried about overpopulation, depletion of fossil fuels, deforestation, and the poor nutritional quality of processed food. The term "organic agriculture" had the same meaning it does today—food produced without synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. In fact, organic agriculture has existed ever since those synthetic pesticides were invented, because there have always been people concerned about their effect on health and the environment. I believe that there is much to be learned from this early coverage of the negative impacts of the industrialized American lifestyle, and the purpose of this chapter is to look at a few selected issues that are still being debated today.

A topic that Friends of the Land addressed frequently, especially in the time period following World War II, was how to feed the world. They realized that food insecurity could cause social and political unrest, and implicated food dependence in Japan and Germany as one cause of World War II. One article in the Spring 1947 issue of *The Land* explained that by 1941 Japan had a larger population than could be supported by domestic agriculture, even with some of the most efficient farming practices in the world. The Japanese were dependent on exporting industrial goods (made from imported raw materials) in order to import food (Chew, 1947). While not the only reason for Japan's involvement in the war, this necessity of importing food was certainly a factor in the conflict, as it was in Germany as well, another country running out of the land to produce the food they needed. The title of this article was "The catch in industrialism," an apt description of how industrialization can actually decrease food security:

> Many large populations live nowadays not primarily by producing their own food, but by producing something that must be exchanged for food…This is the Achilles heel of industry. Big industrial systems reared up on narrow farm foundations, with populations far above the domestic carrying power, have rotten underpinning; they may have power but often it is shaky power…This problem, at bottom the food problem, may recur in other places; it must be solved, lest the entire world blow up…How is the world to remain at peace with countries that get their food by exporting factory goods and yet have constant worries about their trade? Remember that industry in such countries is not merely the people's livelihood but their life; without imports of foods and raw materials, their swollen numbers must perish. (Chew, 1947).

It is very interesting to note that back in 1947, people were concerned about the long-term consequences of entire countries that were dependent on other countries for their food supply. This is an issue that has only been made worse by increased globalization in the 21st

century, and could certainly be a source of potential conflict in the future. Many conflicts around the world have their root in famine and poverty caused by dependence on imported food, yet it seems that "aid" to developing countries is more focused on giving people food and skills to trade for food rather than helping them develop a strong indigenous agriculture. Certainly countries like Japan are even more dependent on imported food than they were in 1947, as their population has increased and their land area has not. It should be noted that while this is a population issue, it is not the same as the *global* population debate, since the problem is not sufficient food but concentration of the world's population in countries that do not produce food. It is interesting that no one either then or now suggested that people emigrate from over-populated countries to under-populated ones to even out this imbalance; all of the emphasis has been on establishing better trade agreements. It is not a very comforting thought in the 21st century that if global trade in food were disrupted for any reason, it would most likely bring on another war fought over food.

Shortly after the war ended, as early as 1950, people began to worry that perhaps it was possible for the entire world to become over-populated, with not enough food to go around. The teachings of Malthus, a 19th century philosopher, saw a huge revival during the "baby boom" immediately after World War II. The Malthusian Theory, as Louis Bromfield described it in *Malabar Farm*, was "that one day, not too far distant from his time, the population of the world would outstrip its available food supply. Explicitly, Malthus claimed that population, when unchecked by artificial means, increases in geometric ratio while substance only increases in mathematical ratio, and that population always increases up to the limit of the means of subsistence. He contended that population is prevented from increasing beyond these limits only by the positive checks of war, famine, pestilence and by the influence of misery and vice" (Bromfield, 1948, p. 212).

During the food shortages caused by the war's devastation, many were worried that the world was overpopulated and could never support 3 billion people, let alone 6 billion. They feared massive food shortages long before the year 2000 and made dire predictions about what would happen if the "current birth rate" continued unchecked. No one seemed to have realized that it was perfectly natural to have an unusually high birth rate immediately after the war—most of the young men had been overseas for 3 or 4 years, and the first thing they did when they got back was to settle down and start a family. Surely the birth rate would have slowed down naturally after a few years once life got back to normal, but the Neo-Malthusians were not willing to wait. They advocated extreme measures of birth control and sterilization, especially in countries that they considered over-populated or underdeveloped. There was certainly a racial element to these suggestions, many of which were quite cruel and only one step short of starting up the war again to kill people so they wouldn't have to share food with them—especially since it turned out that the world was capable of supporting at least twice as many people as they predicted.

Louis Bromfield understood that Malthus had a point; in 1948 he even wrote a chapter in *Malabar Farm* titled, "Malthus was right." By the time he published *Out of the Earth* in 1950,

however, he was much more optimistic than the Neo-Malthusians. The final chapter of *Out of the Earth* is titled, "The world can feed itself if it wants to." In this chapter, Bromfield expresses his belief that with sound agriculture plenty of food could be produced to feed the world. He felt that the problem was not overpopulation but poor agriculture and that the important thing was to restore the worn-out soil that composed much of agricultural land. Some of Bromfield's suggestions for increasing global food production included restoration of depleted soils, raising animals on pasture rather than grain so that the grain could be used for human consumption, and utilizing sewage and garbage as fertilizer to promote better nutrient cycling. He also advocated a better global food distribution system, which along with increased agricultural production per acre in developed countries seems to be the only one of these suggestions which was actually carried out. Bromfield was decidedly against forced birth control and sterilization; he felt that the solution was to "raise *more food* and *improve distribution* and *destroy waste*" (Bromfield, 1950, p. 337). Bromfield stated:

> I am by no means so pessimistic as the Neo-Malthusians and certainly I do not accept with philosophical despair the prospect of half the world starving to death while the remaining half destroys itself in a struggle over the remaining food…The world can certainly feed itself much more efficiently than it is doing today simply by better distribution and the annihilation of the truly vast waste which occurs principally in those nations where good soil and abundance allow a wide surplus over the needs of the nation. It can be accomplished by more efficient farming and a more widespread mechanization designed to increase yields and decrease costs of production. Food supplies can be increased in some nations as much as 300 percent by applying the knowledge we now have concerning soils and by the use of modern fertilizer programs. Food supplies can be increased by the proper use of land…by feeding our livestock population largely upon the soils and decreasing the wasteful and economically extravagant use of grains for the production of animal high proteins, when good grass and legumes can achieve the same results or similar ones at a much lower economic cost and at the same time provide release of the bulk of grains for use directly as cereal proteins by great starving areas of the world. (Bromfield, 1950, pp. 328-329).

Bromfield's suggestions here were much more realistic than some of the other ideas circulating at the time. Some people blithely ignored the issue of soil at all and thought that we could get all our food from the sea, perhaps by growing algae for human consumption. Some thought that nutritional yeast could be grown on sugar made from wood cellulose and nitrogen (industrially fixed using the Haber-Bosch process) and that this would provide a protein source to feed the world (Hall, 1949). Looking back from 2016, it seems like Bromfield was actually the most realistic of the three groups. The world is up to 7 billion people and food shortages today are no worse than they were in 1950; then as now, people are starving because of poverty, wars, political unrest, and increased urbanization. The best agriculture in the world can never solve these problems, which is where Bromfield was wrong; he believed that "poor land makes

poor people" and that all social ills would disappear with good nutrition. The 1950s Neo-Malthusians were wrong about how much food the world could really produce; their predictions were pessimistically too low. The extreme optimists were also wrong; the idea of growing yeast on wood as a food substitute proved to be impractical (and certainly unpalatable), and it seems quite unlikely that algae will ever make a significant caloric contribution to the food supply, although the idea still has modern advocates.

What can we learn today from this debate? Perhaps that we should not be either too pessimistic or too optimistic about feeding the world; Bromfield's statement that "The world can feed itself if it wants to" is still true today. So far the world has risen to the challenge; today the issue is to make sure that this increase in production can be sustained without dependence on non-renewable fertilizers and fuels—which the world can do if it wants to. It is quite interesting that two of the ideas Bromfield had for feeding the world—grass-fed rather than grain-fed cattle and better nutrient cycling from wastes—are finally being considered today even though they were ignored throughout the 20th century. Today, most of the proponents today for grass-fed meat approach it from a climate change perspective because it takes so much fossil fuel to produce grain, not because it would free up that grain for human consumption. These ideas are still in their infancy, however; most beef cattle are still grain-fed and most organic wastes are not recycled. Both of these practices will certainly be necessary to maintain a long-term sustainable food system.

There are still plenty of Neo-Malthusians around today, and predictions about future world population, meat consumption, and energy usage are used to justify many questionable practices. The focus is still on increasing production immediately, rather than gradually as there is need for it. In the meantime, we seem to have completely ignored Bromfield's third suggestion, which was to "destroy waste." In the United States at least, food waste is deplorable. The United States Department of Agriculture estimated that 31% of total US food production was wasted in 2010—this totaled 387 billion Calories every day, or enough food to feed 194 million people a 2000 Calorie diet (Buzby, 2014). This does not even include the huge amount of land used to grow corn and soybeans for biofuels today, which based on grain usage for biofuels and yield data from the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service is about 61 million square miles, an area approximately 1.5 times the size of the state of Ohio. If this waste were ever eliminated, a lot more people could be fed even at current production levels. In regards to the food and overpopulation issues today, I would argue that Bromfield is still right: The world can feed itself if it wants to.

Friends of the Land and Louis Bromfield discussed more than just whether there would be enough food to feed the world; they were concerned about the quality of that food as well. One concern was that food raised on depleted soils was low in essential minerals. Perhaps Louis Bromfield went a little too far by linking most of the social ills in the US to poor nutrition; he seemed to think that there was little personal responsibility involved and that if the diets of people were improved, they would automatically become productive citizens, although there is no doubt that there was significant malnutrition in certain regions of the US at this time, such as

the South. Friends of the Land focused more on the negative impacts of malnutrition on human health and implicated poor food raised on poor soil as a cause for many health problems that we still struggle with today. Dr. Jonathan Forman was one of the first medical scientists to advocate that natural foods raised on good soil would help prevent many ailments (Forman, 1946). Others suggested a link between the increase of obesity and diabetes and the increased consumption of refined carbohydrates, such as white flour and white sugar (Rorty, 1946). Fred D. Miller, D.D.S., considered excess refined carbohydrate consumption as the leading cause of tooth decay and suggested a balanced diet of natural foods as the best way to prevent dental caries (Miller, 1946).

Today, nutritionists are starting to come to the same conclusions that physicians like Dr. Forman were advocating seventy years ago. Yet the typical American diet is still far too high in refined carbohydrates and far too low in vegetables, whole grains, and other natural foods—and the incidence of diabetes, obesity, and other "diseases of affluence" has only increased. The focus of the modern medical system is on curing diseases—not on preventing them. Imagine how much money could have been saved in medical expenses if the focus since 1946 had been on keeping people healthy, not on treating them after they were already sick! Why is there so much more focus on medical research today than on producing healthy food—and why is agricultural research in general focused more on yields and efficiency than on the nutritional value of the food produced? The fields of nutrition and agriculture are very divergent; should they not work together toward the common goal of producing, not just food, but healthy, sustainable food in the most efficient way possible? Perhaps today's natural food advocates will be more successful than their 1950's counterparts in reforming the atrociously unbalanced American diet; only time will tell whether we care about our health enough to focus on preventing disease instead of merely treating it.

Another lesson that we can learn from Friends of the Land is not to put too much faith in "emerging" or "future" technologies that promise to solve all the world's problems, especially the problem of energy. They understood at that time that the global supply of fossil fuels was finite—but were confident that some future breakthrough in atomic energy would provide all the power ever needed (Lowdermilk, 1948). If it were truly possible to fuel our economy with cheap nuclear fusion, scientists would surely have discovered how to do it sixty years ago. Today most people realize that nuclear fusion will probably never become a practical source of energy, but many still seem to assume that it is possible to completely replace fossil fuels with some renewable energy source. The hard truth is that no "renewable" energy available today can ever replace fossil fuels at even a quarter of the level at which we are consuming them now. Some, like ethanol from corn, take so much energy to produce that they have little net energy value; others, like wind and solar, are too erratic to ever be a sole source of cheap, on-demand power. One of the most important things that we can learn from the ungrounded optimism of the 1950s is that we cannot assume that in the future we will have any technologies or resources other than those we have today. It is critical to be conservative of our non-renewable resources, as we may never find a good substitute for them.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons we can learn from Friends of the Land is that "Agriculture's problems are industry's problems" ("The action program", 1951). Friends of the Land was unique in that it was not primarily a farmer's organization, although they certainly had many farmers on their membership rolls. The Friends were primarily industrialists, businessmen, and others from non-farm professions who understood that all industries would collapse without a strong agriculture to support them. They recruited potential members by emphasizing the importance of agriculture to industry:

> There will be no city and no industry unless there are farm products to sell. The farmer produces the basic needs of man. Production beyond the needs of his farm family is the food and fiber he has to sell which makes life in the city possible….*Agriculture's problems are industry's problems*. Businessmen and industrialists are coming to realize that the basis of our civilization and the level of our economic stability is an abundance of natural resources. Of these resources, soil, water and forests are eternally vital. Without these the whole of our economic structure will collapse. Intensive use of soil, without restoring lost fertility, loss of water and soil through erosion and wasteful run-off, all lead to ruin and eviction for both the farmer and the nation. And so it is that *business and industrial leaders have a direct and vital interest in the high efficiency of American agriculture.* ("The action program", 1951).

> There will still be a farmer—after there is no city—because when the soil is so depleted that it produces only for one, it will be the farmer who lives and the city man who starves. Conservation permits the farmer to produce both his own needs—and then there are farm products to sell to those who live off the land in cities. Therefore, in the period of survival, conservation is of greater importance to those of us who live in cities than it is to those who live on the farms. Hunger for freedom follows freedom from hunger and so it is that democracy and human freedom are products of fertile soil. If conservation is a city problem—then the enlightened citizen has a responsibility. ("Friends of the Land", 1956).

This is even more true today than it was in the 1950s, because there are even more people living in cities and even less on farms. Today the food supply of the city dweller may be sourced from thousands of miles away, from hundreds of farms all over the world that are so far removed from consumers that they do not know the names of those who grow their food or even where they live. Most urban citizens are so far removed from agriculture that they do not realize the vulnerability of their position, or even think about where their food came from beyond the grocery store shelves or a restaurant. Concerns about "food insecurity" focus primarily on giving low-income individuals enough money to buy the food they need, not on educating them about where that food came from or helping them to produce some of it themselves.

On the other hand, those who produce the nation's food do not always understand the responsibility they have; agriculture is just a business, and the profit margins are so narrow that farmers often use practices that may not be the best for either the environment or the consumer

just to break even. The scale that farmers have to operate on in order to compete is so large that it is practically impossible for them to really get to know their land or walk through their fields. All too often, soil conservation practices are ignored, and some of the work done by soil conservationists 50 years ago has been reversed, such as the recent practice of growing corn for ethanol production on semi-marginal land that had previously been on the Conservation Reserve Program. Most farmers are so specialized that they produce little more of their own food than the city dweller; those who grow commodity crops such as corn or soybeans do not produce anything they eat unless it is on the side. This disconnect between consumer and producer is not good for soil conservation and threatens to undo much of the progress that has been made since the 1930s.

The soil conservation movement will come back, sooner or later. It has to; the question is whether it will take another Dust Bowl to wake up the public to these issues or if they will become concerned before such a crisis happens again. Must we wait until the good efforts of Bromfield and others in the last century are completely destroyed before we listen to their advice? If we are wise, we will learn from the successes and failures of this earlier movement as we place renewed emphasis on soil conservation in the 21st century. Only by knowing what happened in the past can we learn what worked and what did not. "Those who are ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it"—and I doubt that anyone alive today would want to repeat the Depression and the terrible soil erosion that the 20th century soil conservation movement was formed to combat. Although improved varieties and chemical fertilizers certainly played a role in the huge increase in per-acre agricultural production over the 20th century, the importance of good soil management practices to this success cannot be ignored. The improvements in soil conservation were simultaneous with improvements in machinery and varieties, and it is unlikely that other agricultural improvements would have been successful without the foundation of soil conservation.

In the end, much less has changed since Bromfield's day than we might think. Louis Bromfield and Friends of the Land were right about soil conservation—and as time goes by it becomes more and more evident how right they really were. We are still dependent on the soil for our food, and conservation of soil as one of our most precious natural resources is more important today than ever before. It is important for modern conservationists to learn from both the successes and failures of Friends of the Land, to learn what worked and what didn't. By learning from the past, we can make better decisions about what to do in the future and how to continue to conserve our soils wisely in the 21st century.

Bromfield's Farming Practices: Still Relevant Today

Louis Bromfield was not a scientist. He was a writer—quite a good one—who became passionately interested in conservation agriculture when he returned to the United States just before World War II. His goal at Malabar Farm was not to conduct scientific research, but to apply principles that had been discovered by scientific research on a large scale and demonstrate them to visitors. Bromfield did not take detailed scientific measurements of yield, soil quality, or plant health; he wrote about the results that he saw when he implemented conservation farming practices. Many of Bromfield's critics claimed that he exaggerated the restoration work he was doing at Malabar Farm, and it is certainly true that Bromfield would sometimes stretch the facts to strengthen a point; however, most of what he advocated was sound agricultural practice. The purpose of this chapter is to look at what Louis Bromfield did at Malabar from a modern scientific point of view, and to consider how his ideas could be applied to the modern sustainability debate.

Perhaps the single most important way in which Louis Bromfield was ahead of his time was in his adoption of conservation tillage practices. Bromfield was influenced in this by Edward Faulkner, whose book *Plowman's Folly*, published in 1943, was the first serious critique of the moldboard plow. Faulkner believed that moldboard plowing was very bad for the soil because it increased erosion, removed surface residue that held rainfall, preserved weed seeds that would return to the surface and sprout the next time the soil was plowed, destroyed macropores in the soil, and created a buried layer of compacted organic matter that prevented deep soil water from coming up to the plant root zone. Faulkner wrote:

> We have equipped our farmers with a greater tonnage of machinery per man than any other nation. Our agricultural population has proceeded to use that machinery to the end of destroying the soil in less time than any other people has been known to do in recorded history. This is hardly a record to be proud of. It gains nothing in attractiveness, moreover, when we consider that our Chinese friends and the often despised peasantry of the so-called backward countries of the world can produce more per acre without machinery than the American farmer can with all his fine equipment. Any reasonably well-traveled person will confirm this statement…The explanation is that the poor farmer can't afford the equipment that would make it impossible for him to continue growing such high yields per acre…
>
> So, I introduce you to something so old in agriculture that it may justly be considered as new. The whole thesis is perhaps so clearly obvious that we have universally failed to see it. Seven years were required for me to break away from conventional ways of thinking about soil. Like all others trained in agriculture, I had vainly tried to piece the puzzle together, in order to make of agriculture a consistent science. Then I discovered, through certain tests, that the trouble lay in the operation which preceded all the tests, namely plowing. It was as if one tried to assemble a picture puzzle with the pieces upside down. By simply correcting

> the basic error—by incorporating all of the organic matter into the surface of the soil—the difficulties all disappeared as if by magic. (Faulkner, 1943, pp. 5, 15)

Faulkner believed that deep plowing should never be done and recommended disking crop residues into the top few inches of soil, which left much residue on the surface and resulted in good water infiltration and very little erosion. Bromfield agreed with most of Faulkner's ideas but did believe that deep plowing was sometimes necessary to get organic matter into very hard soils and to break up heavy sod (Bromfield, 1945, p. 178). He implemented what he called "trash farming," the word "trash" referring to crop residues and other organic material which was left on the surface and mixed into the top layer of soil rather than being deeply buried. Bromfield noted that, "Only when we ceased plowing these fields did we find the absolute check to loss of rainfall and topsoil" (Bromfield, 1945, p. 180). He found that fields that were roughly prepared with a large amount of surface residue had no runoff or erosion and that clover and alfalfa seed had a higher germination rate on the trash-farmed soil than bare plowed soil. Bromfield mentioned that sometimes this method of soil preparation resulted in high crops of weeds, but he found that mowing the weeds before they went to seed (they must have been mainly summer annuals) was an effective method of control and added mulch to the soil surface as well (Bromfield, 1945, p. 182).

What I find the most fascinating about these early experiments with reduced tillage systems is that they were done without the use of herbicides—and were successful. Today, Faulkner's ideas have largely been proven right, and soil scientists are in agreement that moldboard plowing is detrimental to soil health and that tillage should be reduced as much as possible. However, the invention of herbicides, which became available to the public soon after World War II, coupled with the more recent development of herbicide-resistant genetically engineered crops in the mid-1990s, have made modern no-till farming practices synonymous with excessive herbicide use and the increasingly controversial social issue of GMO seeds owned by a handful of agro-chemical corporations. Many farmers today believe that there are only two alternatives: a chemically-soaked no-till system or extreme moldboard plowing that results in soil erosion.

Yet Faulkner and Bromfield were advocating a minimal tillage system that left residues on the soil surface and eliminated erosion and runoff, without the use of herbicides. It seems that this would be even better for the soil than modern no-till systems because herbicides certainly have some detrimental effect on soil microorganisms, in addition to the potential for overspray drift to damage non-target areas and run off into waterways. Perhaps the current increased interest in organic agriculture will encourage soil scientists to look back at Faulkner and Bromfield's ideas. Certainly it is possible to conserve soil without the use of herbicides; after all, if reduced tillage is supposed to mimic a natural system (which was the goal of both Faulkner and modern no-till advocates), it ought to work without herbicides since herbicides are not a part of natural systems. Louis Bromfield established Malabar Farm during a unique historical period when scientific research was being done on soil conservation, but when the agricultural chemical industry was still in its infancy. As we start to realize that excessive use of chemicals may be

unsustainable in the long run, the ideas proposed by Bromfield at Malabar may become increasingly important in determining the direction of future cropping systems research.

Another keystone of Bromfield's farming practices at Malabar was what he called "grass farming," or raising cattle on pasture for dairy and meat production. Much of Malabar Farm was hilly land and subject to erosion when planted in row crops. Bromfield initially implemented strip cropping and grew both grain and forage crops, but as time went on he turned more and more of Malabar's fields into pasture and hay for his livestock. Grass and legumes figured prominently in Bromfield's soil restoration plan; he especially praised alfalfa for its ability to bring up nutrients from the subsoil with its deep root system. He recorded that young alfalfa plants often displayed nutrient deficiencies, which disappeared once the roots penetrated into the minerally-rich subsoil (Bromfield, 1950, p. 123). After several years of trying to produce a number of different crops following the old-fashioned "general farm" model, Bromfield decided that grass-fed livestock was the most profitable use for the rolling fields of Malabar:

> Gradually, as the fertility of the fields mounted, we found ourselves moving deeper and deeper under the pressure of common sense and economics into streamlined, efficient, specialty farming and a program based upon small grains and grasses…We have become a factory for grass in all its forms—hay, grass silage, and pasture. Our livestock has become incidental to the main specialty. They are merely the factory which processes the raw material we produce in the form of grass. The factory in the livestock barns processes it into milk, cheese, veal, baby beef and dairy heifers which we ship to the eastern markets…We are going up hill all the time, concentrating all our efforts upon a definite, streamlined program of grass and cattle, building our fertility instead of tearing it down and making more money per acre than any general farmer can make and more than most corn and hog farmers are making. (Bromfield, 1948, pp. 51-52).

Bromfield listed several reasons for this move toward grass farming. One was that Malabar was located in hill country, making it much more suited for hay and pasture than corn. He developed a land-use plan that took the topography of his land into account, leaving the steepest, rockiest areas as woodlots, maintaining other steep fields as permanent pasture, implementing strip cropping on the less steep slopes with forages and small grains, and growing some corn on the flattest areas (Bromfield, 1948, pp. 55-56). He pastured both dairy and beef cattle in the summer and produced hay and haylage (as well as a small amount of corn silage) to feed the cattle in the winter. Since first-cutting hay is always inferior to later cuttings, he turned the first cutting into silage and baled later cuttings for hay (Bromfield, 1955, p. 56). Like any farmer who grows hay, Bromfield sometimes had difficulty getting his hay dried before an impending rainstorm. He tried to solve this problem with a "hay drying barn", which was actually an aluminum tobacco drying barn with fans which he hoped would send enough air through the hay to dry it. This was one of Bromfield's ideas that did not work out quite as well as he made it sound in *From My Experience*, and was later abandoned. The rest of Bromfield's grass farming operation, however, seems to have been quite successful.

Grass-fed beef and milk from pastured dairy cattle is becoming increasingly popular today, especially as consumers are becoming more concerned about the environmental impacts and unethical treatment of animals in conventional systems. Even the phrase "grass farming" is being revived as a new trend in agriculture, used in the same sense that Bromfield did back in 1948. In fact, Bromfield's pastured system would be considered one of the best ways to raise cattle today. When cattle are raised on grass and legumes and only given a small amount of grain, most of the protein in the resulting meat and milk comes from natural symbiotic nitrogen fixation rather than synthetically produced nitrogen fertilizers, saving the fossil fuel energy used to synthesize ammonia in addition to the fuel used to power the equipment necessary to grow grain. Cattle are ruminants and are healthier when fed primarily a grass-based diet than a grain-based diet, and cattle fed a predominately grain-based diet are likely to have higher concentrations of pathogenic bacteria such as *E. coli* O175:H7 in their feces (Callaway, 2009). Thus, grass-fed beef may not only be better for the environment than feedlot beef, but may help decrease the risk of foodborne illness caused by virulent bacterial pathogens that are easily spread in feedlots.

As we start to look more critically at our food system and attempt to make it more sustainable, one of the areas that could use the most improvement is the production of animal products. An increase in pastured and grass-based livestock production, perhaps coupled with an overall decrease in meat consumption, could save an enormous amount of fossil fuel energy. Louis Bromfield was ahead of his time by promoting a pasture-based system, at the same time that most farmers were going away from such a system. By 1955, Bromfield also included hogs in his system, raising them on legume-rich pasture and barley (Bromfield, 1955, p. 24). What he liked most about this system was that the hogs were not only healthier than those raised in a confined operation, but had a much better quality of life because they were allowed to have quite a bit of freedom. Bromfield said that, "Among all farm animals the hog resents a curtailment of its freedom more than any other and, as every farmer knows, is the most difficult to keep confined in any small area" (Bromfield, 1955, pp. 29-30). It seems that Bromfield's system, or a modification of it, might be a good solution to many of the animal rights, pollution, and sustainability issues that burden animal production today.

Finally, Bromfield was far ahead of his time when it came to organic vegetable production; his vegetables cooled in cold spring water might be even more attractive today than they were in his time. Bromfield was not a strictly "organic" grower according to today's certification criteria, since he did make use of synthetic fertilizers in his soil restoration efforts, especially potassium and phosphorous (Bromfield, 1950, p. 238). What made Bromfield's vegetables different from those grown by other farmers was that he did not use pesticides on his vegetables after the first four years. Bromfield was very skeptical about the safety of pesticides in food, long before the public was aware of the very real dangers of arsenical insecticides, DDT, and the other pesticides in use at that time:

> In all the years I had farmed or gardened in the rich country of northern France we had never used a dust or an insecticide or a spray against either disease or insect

> pests. Why should there be so many plagues and insects here at home? Why was the market swamped each year with new forms of poisons to protect our apples or celery, our cabbage, our string beans, indeed, all the range of fruits and vegetables that are consumed by the American people? Some residue of these poisons must somehow reach all of us. Certainly they could be harmful. Could it be that they were in part at least responsible for the increasing toll of heart disease, of glandular derangements, of cancer. The average city dweller was absorbing all these poisons in however minute quantities along with the chlorine and other chemicals used to disinfect the drinking water polluted by his own sewage. (Bromfield, 1950, p. 235).

Bromfield believed that widespread devastation by insects or diseases was only a symptom of poor plant health caused by poor soil health. He thought that healthy plants ought to be able to fight off insects and diseases and that the pesticides were only treating the symptoms, not the cause. To increase the organic material and beneficial microorganisms in the soil, Bromfield applied large amounts of barnyard manure to his vegetable field and incorporated it using his "trash plowing" method, in addition to adding chemical fertilizers and trace elements. He also used mulch in the garden, which kept the soil moist and cool and promoted earthworms and fungi in the soil. Bromfield seems to have even described some sort of mychorrhizal association between plants and fungi, a topic that is being extensively researched today: "Strands of one kind of grayish fungus, which grew in a lacelike pattern, attached themselves to the decaying mulch and penetrated into the soil itself. Closer examination revealed the apparent fact that strands of the fungus seemed actually to be attached to the hairlike roots of the living plants, both on the surface and beneath the earth as if actually they were transmitting to the living plants the minerals and elements breaking down in the mulch itself and actually feeding them" (Bromfield, 1950, p. 242).

Bromfield found that he did not need to spray pesticides for insects or diseases once he improved the health and fertility of the soil. He found that when the plants were healthy, the insects were not a problem, even if they were present: "Perhaps most remarkable of all was the fact that insect pests were actually visible at times each year although they showed little or no inclination to attack the plants" (Bromfield, 1950, p. 239). These insects only attacked plants that were sick or weak for other reasons, not those that were healthy. When he did find it necessary to spray for insects, he tried to use the least toxic substances available and only those derived from plants, such as pyrethrum or rotenone; but he suspected that even these could be detrimental to non-target organisms: "It is therefore reasonable to suppose that even a mild insecticide such as rotenone could also have a serious toxic effect upon certain living soil bacteria and even upon earthworms and other beneficial living organisms which are essentially a part of any truly healthy, living, and productive soils" (Bromfield, 1955, p. 194). He had serious reservations about the long-term health effects of bioaccumulative insecticides such as DDT, which have subsequently been found to be justified:

> In the case of vegetables and of all foods including milk, we have no liking at Malabar for consuming in our daily meals quantities, either large or minute, of poisons universally recognized as lethal, or of poisons such as arsenic or DDT which the system does not eliminate in any normal fashion, but which accumulate gradually and slowly within the human body. Nor do we have any desire to act as laboratory specimens for the testing of viciously poisonous inorganic chemical, byproducts dumped on the market without proper tests or research into their lethal quantities, poisons advertised as so violent and viciously effective in destroying insect life that the operator is warned to use a gas mask while handling them. Whether they do real harm and serve in a general way to impair the health of the whole nation and to create an increase in the degenerative diseases of middle age, I do not know at this stage of the game nor does anyone else. One thing is certain—that used as they are in the production and processing of our foods to the amount of millions of pounds a year, they can do no one any good. (Bromfield, 1955, p. 197).

By 1955, Bromfield had increased production of vegetables grown without pesticides and was selling them at his newly constructed roadside market where the vegetables were kept cool and crisp in fresh water from the perpetually flowing spring. Bromfield was able to get a premium price for his produce because it was such high quality, much better than that sold in chain stores (Bromfield, 1955, p. 274). In addition to growing his vegetables organically, Bromfield also grew heritage varieties that were more flavorful than modern cultivars developed for commercial production. Long before consumers became concerned about breeding methods and genetically modified seeds, Bromfield was concerned that modern plant breeding was focused on producing a product suitable for shipping and processing rather than on nutrition and flavor: "While many of the plant breeders have made excellent contributions, commercially speaking, to the whole field of vegetable and fruit production by creating new varieties that will ship or freeze well or lie around for days without actually rotting, they have done little toward improving quality and flavor. The showiest and biggest vegetable or variety of vegetables is not always the best, and most certainly the one that ships the best and keeps the longest is never going to win a prize from the Society of Gourmets" (Bromfield, 1955, p. 279).

Today, organic vegetable production is again becoming popular, although Bromfield would probably be disturbed that some inorganic pesticides such as copper are still allowed on organic farms. Some organic growers do focus on maintaining soil health in order to grow healthy plants, just as Bromfield did; others rely on "organic" chemicals to control pests and are fundamentally little different from conventional growers. Large-scale organic production still uses those tasteless, easily shipped varieties of which Bromfield was so critical, as the flavorful heirloom varieties are unsuited to the current mass-distribution system. It is only at the local level, such as in farmers' markets and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs, that customers can buy those "old-fashioned," flavorful varieties. Meanwhile, the majority of the US population has grown so accustomed to the tasteless conventional varieties that there is little incentive for breeders to develop new cultivars with better flavor and nutritional value, so the

gap between local, organic, heirloom produce and conventionally farmed vegetables has only widened since Bromfield's day. Then as now, the only way to get good-quality fresh vegetables to consumers is to produce them locally and on a small scale.

These three examples of Bromfield's farming practices and philosophies are some of the most relevant to sustainability discussions today, but this brief summary is by no means an exhaustive coverage of what Bromfield accomplished at Malabar. Readers with further interest in Bromfield's farming practices are encouraged to read his four farm books in which he covered these ideas and more in great depth: *Pleasant Valley* (1945), *Malabar Farm* (1948), *Out of the Earth* (1950), and *From My Experience* (1955). Much of what Bromfield advocated 70 years ago is highly relevant to the current debate about sustainability, and deserves consideration by modern scholars. It is intriguing to speculate how the history of agriculture in the United States might have been different if some of Bromfield's suggestions had been implemented on the majority of farms in the United States beginning in the 1950s. Would the herbicide-dependent no-till system and its accompanying herbicide-resistant genetically modified seeds ever have been developed if soil erosion had been effectively checked with "trash farming" as advocated by Faulkner? Would the current issues with concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and even the *E. coli* outbreaks have occurred if farmers had adopted Bromfield's pasture-based livestock production systems for cattle and hogs? Would plant breeding have focused on producing flavorful, healthful vegetables for backyard gardeners and small vegetable producers instead of tasteless, easy-to ship varieties for commercial growers if consumers would have insisted that they wanted local, pesticide-free, flavorful produce?

We will never know what could have happened if sustainable farming had triumphed over industrialized agriculture in the 1950s. Certainly many of the problems that we are dealing with now were in their infancy in Bromfield's day. Commercial agriculture has now become a behemoth that cares only about profit and high yields, with little concern for soil health, animal welfare, consumer health, or long-term sustainability. Small farmers were ruthlessly eliminated in the "get big or get out" agricultural environment of the latter half of the 20th century, leaving us in the current precarious position where less than 1% of the US population grows the food that everyone consumes. Today, we can decide whether we want to continue the current unsustainable paradigm, which will eventually be threatened by shortages of fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources, or whether we are ready to admit that we may have been wrong to focus solely on yields and production efficiency. We need to critically re-evaluate our agricultural system and consider how we can make it more sustainable. Fortunately, that does not mean that we need to come up with completely novel ideas; much thought was given to this very topic by Bromfield and others in the 1940s and '50s and we could save a lot of time and money in research by looking back at their ideas. It may well be that Malabar Farm will have a greater impact on the agriculture of the 21st century than it did on that of the 20th.

Conclusion: The Importance of Malabar Today

The information presented here about Louis Bromfield and Malabar Farm is just a small sample of the vast quantity of material written about soil conservation in the 1940s and '50s. It is undeniable that the mid-20th century soil conservation movement had a huge impact on modern agriculture. Most of the credit for increased crop yields in the latter half of the 20th century is given to better varieties and increased use of synthetic fertilizers, but even these improved varieties would not have been nearly as successful if the issue of soil conservation had not been addressed first. Yet as critical as this movement was, it is seldom discussed in history programs today. Most Americans have heard about the Dust Bowl and the catastrophic wind erosion in the Great Plains, but few realize that water erosion in Ohio and the eastern half of the US was just as severe and devastating to farmers. The idea that our food supply is dependent on conserving our soil is foreign to most people; our predominately urban society is so removed from agriculture that many people do not even realize that their food comes from plants, let alone that those plants need soil to grow.

This disconnect between consumer and producer has resulted in a general ignorance about anything to do with agriculture amongst the American public. The few consumers who do want to know where their food comes from have difficulty finding accurate information because of the plethora of emotional and often biased material currently circulating, often written by people who have some knowledge of agriculture but fail to understand how the American food supply ended up where it is today. On the other hand, farmers are often ignorant of agricultural history as well and in an effort to increase their ever-narrowing profit margins are beginning to make the same mistakes today that led to the soil erosion of the 1930s and before. The practices that contributed to soil erosion in the past included plowing up marginal land that should have been left in natural vegetation; leaving fields bare of groundcover during the winter snows and spring rains; destroying tree lines that served as windbreaks and buffer strips around waterways; and planting huge areas of monocultures, such as corn, wheat, or cotton, initially due to high market prices and later due to low ones. Farmers today are beginning to make the same mistakes again, this time on an even larger scale than before, yet the general public is not aware of the danger. Friends of the Land believed that the only way to solve this problem of ignorance and apathy in a democratic society was by education:

> Our mission is education—to inform the public. Deep and lasting reforms cannot be accomplished by compulsion, by bribery or regimentation. They can be achieved only through information, knowledge and education. The judgment of our citizens can be no better than their information. And it becomes the mission of the Friends of the Land to help our citizens understand the gravity of the situation—that the strength and welfare of a nation is dependent upon its people and its resources—and with an understanding we hope will come the cooperation in the democratic way to carry out needed conservation reforms. ("Friends of the Land", 1956).

Today, more than ever, we need conservation education. We need agricultural education. Most importantly, we need education in the history of agriculture and in good agricultural practices. The American people need to know where they came from and where they are headed if nothing changes. Soil degradation is a real, tangible issue that could become a serious threat long before more nebulous issues like climate change—and incidentally, good soil management practices that increase soil organic matter and encourage planting trees and permanent grasslands would help sequester a lot of carbon. It is very important not just to scare people with the potential of what might happen, but to give them the information necessary to do something about it. Much environmental information today is so depressing and the solutions so small compared to the problem that many people assume there is nothing they can really do to help and just wait for the inevitable—while continuing the same lifestyles that caused the problem to begin with. The problem must be presented, but also the solution, which is good soil management practices, proper land use, and diversified agriculture. Education must be honest and present the facts, but it must be *solution-oriented* education, not the *problem-oriented* education more prevalent today.

Everyone who eats should have the opportunity to learn about agriculture. It should be taught in schools and given just as much emphasis as other subjects considered important today, like computer skills. Children should learn the history of American agriculture, the issues facing it today, and practical skills like planting a garden and growing vegetables in a way that is good for the soil. Agricultural history should be emphasized in higher education as well. Most students majoring in agriculture today have little knowledge of agricultural history but assume that the way things are done today is the best ever—and also fail to understand that companies trying to sell them products may be a biased source of agricultural information. They would have a better understanding of current agricultural issues if they were required to take a course specifically focused on the history of American agriculture, especially in the 20th century. Agriculture should be included in general history curriculums for all ages, as good agriculture is the foundation of any great civilization and poor agriculture has been the downfall of many.

Malabar Farm is more than just a farm; it is a symbol of a transitional time in American agriculture and one of the few remaining monuments to that period. Farmers, educators, students, and the general public today can gain much by studying the history of agriculture in the United States, and can use that information to make better recommendations for the future. The focus should not just be on boosting yields per acre, but on maintaining optimal soil health while producing a product of superior nutritional value. Emphasis should be made on producing what is necessary for today without compromising the ability of soils to continue producing in the future. If we heed the lessons learned in the past and avoid making the same mistakes, we will be much further on our way to a sustainable agricultural system. Let us continue to preserve Malabar Farm and the writings of soil conservationists, and let us make that information more readily available to the public than it is now.

Manifesto

FRIENDS OF THE LAND

A NON-PROFIT, NON-PARTISAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SOIL, RAIN AND MAN

I. Evidence of the Need

. . . A good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey . . . Here thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; thou shalt not lack anything. . . .

Deuteronomy, 8, 7–9.

The waters wear the stones; thou washest away the things that grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man. . . . If my land cry against me, or that the furrows thereof likewise complain . . . let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

The Book of Job.

IT IS AN OLD STORY, often repeated in the time of Man. We have talked a lot about it in this country lately. We have barely begun to do something about it in a large, sensible and connected way.

The need to do more is urgent. The record is plain. Over vast areas we stand confronted with defaced landscapes, depleted water supplies, grave dislocations in the hydrologic cycle, and an all but catastrophic degradation of soil and Man.

We have hurt our land. We have made much of it ugly in the plain implication that land laid to waste will not support that measure of individual freedom and those constantly higher standards of living which we as Americans have been led to expect.

Down our streams every year go enormous quantities of plant food elements—nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash that might have produced bread, meat, milk, and garments. This huge loss represents only part of the annual erosion bill. Erosion not only removes plant nutrients; it carries away at one disastrous stroke the available plant food, the material from which plant food is made, the micro-organisms that aid in the manufacture of available plant nutrients, the mineral matter that holds these organic and inorganic materials—the whole body of the soil.

Soil misuse makes people poor. Soil displacement is followed by human displacement. The first shock of displacement is felt in the open country. But soon, as yields and trade fall off, it is also felt in the towns.

Any land is all of one body. If one part is skinned, bared to the beat of the weather, wounded, not only the winds spread the trouble, dramatically, but the surface veins and arteries of the nation, its streams and rivers, bear ill. Soiled water depletes soil, exhausts underground and surface water supplies, raises flood levels, dispossesses shore and upland birds and animals from their accustomed haunts, chokes game-fish, diminishes shoreline seafood, clogs harbors, and stops with grit and boulders the purr of dynamos.

Eroded soil is soil in some part dead, devitalized. Soil debility, soon repeated in nutritive deficiencies, spreads undernourishment. Evidence on this point is far from complete; but the trend of accumulating findings is unmistakable. If the soil does not have it in it, plants that grow there do not; nor do the animals that eat those plants;

nor the people throughout a country who eat those plants and animals. Soil debility soon removes stiffening lime from the national backbone, lowers the beat and vigor of the national bloodstream, and leads to a devitalized society.

We, too, are all of one body. We all live on, or from, the soil.

No matter which political party gains ascendancy as the years go by; whether the swing be from middle Left to far Right, or to the farther Left; whether we remain at peace or go to war again, this fact will remain: so long as we keep on scrubbing off, blowing off, killing off our topsoil, business and social conditions in this country will remain fundamentally unsound.

II. A Statement of Purpose

WE THEREFORE NOW INTEND to organize and to bring quickly into action a non-profit association or society to support, increase and, to a greater degree, unify, all efforts for the conservation of soil, rain and all the living products, especially Man.

III. What We Can Do

WE INTEND first to work with friends of conservation, both lay and professional, here in this country, and later with like-minded men and women in other lands.

With the conservation idea advancing to a wider outlook and more practical techniques of research and husbandry; with conservation becoming, in effect, a working philosophy to reconcile the ways of Man and Nature—the time is right for such a society to form and act.

The need is imminent. Much of the civilized world is at war again, sick at heart and weary. Even this far removed from the main centers of pressure on soil and humans, we feel, and shall continue to feel, the strain and tension. A wartime psychology fixes attention on devices of slaughter and destruction. It diverts human effort and ingenuity from studies and devices to perpetuate the source values of humankind.

All friends of conservation need now to move and speak out together as never before.

Whether your principal personal interest be in soil, grass, trees, songbirds, game, flowers, livestock, landscape or outdoor recreation; and whatever your occupation—farmer, banker, forester, agrostologist, journalist, anthropologist, ecologist, teacher, student, or what not—we can all work together for the good of the land.

We may promote the conservation of land and water resources in the United States of America by:

1. Assembling information regarding the economic, industrial and social need for conserving our land and waters; placing before the people of the country various issues and problems in land and water conservation; and forwarding in the interests of the public, specific policies of conservation.
2. Encouraging the organization of affiliated regional and local groups.
3. Preparing and making available to our membership and to the general public a magazine, THE LAND, and other literature on the technique, importance, and significance of land and water conservation, and recommending to our members suitable literature prepared by other organizations, operating in special fields.
4. Fostering investigation, exploration, research and experimentation into the science of soil and water

conservation, and recognizing achievements in this field by electing outstanding scientists as honorary members of the society, or by special awards.

5. Encouraging and furthering the practice of land and water conservation by individuals, cooperative groups, States and subdivisions thereof, and the Federal Government, and promoting legislative measures and the efficient and economical use of public funds in furtherance thereof.
6. Recognizing outstanding accomplishments in land and water conservation by farmers, soil conservation districts and other local groups, by suitable citations and awards.
7. Promoting inclusion in the curricula of our educational systems of courses on the significance and technique of land and water conservation.
8. Fostering the participation of the youth and youth organizations and especially unemployed youth, in a moral equivalent of war against wastage of soil and water.
9. Cooperating with other organizations interested in the conservation of trees, grass, wildlife and people in promoting common objectives.
10. Convening periodical conferences in various parts of the country to obtain wider recognition that soil wastage threatens our institutions.

We could promote the conservation of land and water resources in this and foreign lands by:

1. Appointing in each foreign country a "correspondent" (without pay) for the exchange of information.
2. Maintaining a clearing house of information on conservation in foreign countries, and from time to time publishing a survey of foreign activities in this field.
3. Encouraging the establishment in this and in foreign countries of private organizations for the furtherance of conservation.
4. Furthering the adoption of courses on conservation by educational institutions throughout the world, and the granting of traveling fellowships to foreign officials and students for the study of conservation.
5. Advising foreign governments on methods of establishing programs for land and water conservation.
6. Assisting foreign mission and educational organizations in incorporating programs for land and water conservation as a major objective of their work with foreign peoples.
7. At an appropriate time calling a World Conservation Congress.

MORRIS LLEWELLYN COOKE,
CHARLES W. COLLIER,
BRYCE C. BROWNING,
CHARLES E. HOLZER,
RUSSELL LORD.

Appendix B: The Saginaw FFA and Farmers' Trip to Malabar Farm

The F.F.A. and Farmers' Class Trip to Malabar Farms
Howard Lytle, Teacher of Vocational Agriculture
Arthur Hill High School, Saginaw, Michigan

This report, submitted by the Saginaw F.F.A. Chapter Adviser, was so interesting and contained so many ideas of value to F.F.A. members, we are reproducing it in full for your use.

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In our daytime agricultural classes at the Arthur Hill High School in Saginaw and in the Farmers' Evening Classes, we discussed Louis Bromfield's books, "Pleasant Valley" and "The World We Live In." Special attention was given to those chapters dealing with land use and agriculture in general.

In these books Mr. Bromfield states that farm wages should compete with or overshadow salaries paid by industry. He is definitely opposed to subsidy and brands it as a detriment to good farm management. He believes in contour farming, even on seemingly flat lands with more than four per cent slope. Clean plowing and square cornered fields, he says, are as modern as 1914 cars. Good soil can be turned into farm ponds and show a profit. Farmers must cease to be "jacks of all trades" and specialize in a few well-managed crops based on one central theme. He encouraged selling these crops direct to consumers. This system is called the vertical system of farming.

He believes that all wildlife, including pheasants, foxes, squirrels, and crows, have their place on a farm, but that they should be maintained in proper balance. These ideas and many others that are contrary to generally accepted practices are expressed by Mr. Bromfield.

As an outgrowth of these discussions, a request was made by George Schemm for a trip to be organized to Malabar Farms near Lucas, Ohio. These farms are owned and operated by Mr. Bromfield, the author of the above books.

The principal objective of the trip was for groups to study the type of farm enterprise in which they are most interested as well as several other farm enterprises in general. They wanted to learn the author's reasons for his ideas as stated above.

This was to be accomplished by having the two proposed bus loads take a general tour of the farms. They were then expected to break up into groups. A general report was to be given at the Saturday noon luncheon. These plans were partially abandoned in favor of better methods.

In the first place, only one bus load of F.F.A. students and farmers were able to attend. Also, Mr. Bromfield gave us his undivided attention from Friday at 3:00 pm., the time of arrival, until 7:00 p.m. and again from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, the time of our departure. The Saturday luncheon discussion was abandoned as there was no particular need for it, but a dinner discussion at Scotty's Supper Club and Tourist Cabins on Friday evening gave us an opportunity to analyze results and organize plans for the Saturday tour.

The Greyhound bus was driven by Charles Moye, who was later presented with a gold and black ball pen set for his untiring effort and congeniality. The bus left Arthur Hill High School about 8:00 a.m. on Friday. Time was taken to attach banners and make other necessary preparations. Soil types, and causes, and proper use were discussed along the way. Our group in particular noticed Tuscola silt loam near Frankenmuth Junction where low water beaches and bars from Saginaw Bay were located once.

The light sandy soils between Saginaw and Olio were caused by sand beaches when the greater part of Michigan was covered by water. Some soil in this area was fairly productive but to a large extent, good land was patchy and interspersed with large areas of from little to no agricultural value. The rolling and lower soil south of Fenton showed the beginning of a glacial deposit of rolling hills that once was a peninsula that extended east to the Rochester area. This area is used for general farming, dairying, and has good orchards. Much of it is fairly sandy and shows effects of all types of erosion. It was agreed that unless proper land use was made of this area, it would soon follow many other thousands of acres in Michigan land out of the realm of farming.

We left the rolling higher land near Ann Arbor. Rich, dark, flat, low soil continued south and east of Toledo. Patches of beach sand broke through, especially in the Miami vicinity. These sandy patches were used for melons, some truck gardening, orchards (many of which are being abandoned or bulldozed out), and just unused land. The lower, better soil was being used for beets and general farm crops. Tiling seemed to be the order of the day. This tile was being spaced from two to four rods apart. Much of the tile activity has been speeded up because of the heavy rainfall and flooded land in this area. Floods are reported by Mr. Bromfield to be the worst since 1913. Proper land use throughout this area would have prevented these floods. Water should have been trapped at its source as it is on the Malabar farms. Proper land use, as shown by Barney Meyers, soil conservationist from the Saginaw area, would have allowed flood water to filter through the soils. Mr. Meyers pointed out the fact that tiles were being placed in rows two to four rods apart. He showed that this was necessary as improper land use had removed the humus. Water was unable to filter through the heavy clay. Crops were late in this area and although we were one hundred miles south of Saginaw, Emil Heine, William Popp, Eric Senn, and many others agreed that their crops were farther advanced. Corn was shorter, beets were shorter, but wheat showed slightly more color. The first wheat shocks showed south of this area near Findlay. We found few outstanding farms. They all seemed to show some form of abuse as Mr. Bromfield termed "root, hog, and die." If fields had been covered with grass or some other crop, humus and plant foods had been replaced as soon as they were removed, soil would have held flood water and prevented it from flooding low areas. Water would have filtered slowly through the soil and excess tiling would have been unnecessary, he said. Soil was compared to bank accounts—a large account can be drawn upon repeatedly with little apparent damage—a small account can accommodate as many withdrawals only if constant desposits [sic] are made. The latter method shows better business ability and often terminates with a more substantial account.

From the low area we passed through gently rolling land. As we continued south and east the hills became very steep. The soil in this area was left by previous glacial action and is known as various types of Wooster and Miami soil,

Specifically the soil of Malabar is known as Wooster silt loam, one of the richest soils minerally and, if handled properly, one of the most productive in the world, especially for grass, hay pasture, and grass silage. Despite this fact, at least four per cent of the farms in this soil type area are abandoned or below the level which produces taxes and interest. This record has come about through improper farming methods.

Sorrel, daisies, and other plant life showed evidence of sour soil, too sour for proper production of farm crops. This soil acidity was caused by the gradual dissolution of lime. The lime water would run down the barren hills to swollen creeks and cause floods. Crops grown on this worn out soil are lacking in minerals, amino acids and health maintaining qualities. Children, as well as livestock, grown on this soil are weak, listless, brittle boned, and occasionally have retarded mentality.

Mr. Bromfield pointed out two important examples. Seventy-five per cent of the draftees grown on worn-out Alabama soils were rejected as unfit for military use. Whirl-away and Phalanx were produced on the King Ranch and Kentucky blue grass areas respectively after proper plant foods and minerals had been restored to soils. Their predecessors had no market because of organic deficiencies of nutrition in worn-out soils. Although the blood lines were the finest in the world, once the minerals were restored, both stables produced fine horses once more.

Malabar Farm is located in this hilly area. It is composed of four farms totaling nine hundred and sixty acres that were formerly worn out farms, and one of one hundred and sixty acres that was in slightly better condition.

A resident of Lucas directed us to the farm. He said, "You will recognize it when you get there." We soon found out what he meant. We left a depleted area as previously described and to our right we saw contoured fields on a hillside and valley virtually panted with tall, thick, ripened wheat blending in with splashes of other colored farm and forage crops. These were dotted with farm ponds and fringed with a border of large trees under which thick young underbrush showed a dark life-green color. The ponds and trees acted as traps to hold the water and raise the water table for later, hot, dry weather use.

Four farm homes landscaped with flowers, shrubs, and fruit trees focused our attention to one that was a large, spacious ranch type house. Over the entrance to the farm hung a sign known all over the world—"Malabar Farm."

Mr. Cook, a recent graduate of Ohio Agricultural College, who has worked at the farm for five years, was filling in a silo with rich, leafy alfalfa hay in the one-tenth bloom. He was adding one hundred pounds of ground corn for each ton of alfalfa. The corn increases the total digestible nutrients, makes the silage more palatable and helps to produce the bacteria that prevents putrefaction or rotting of the ensilage. Proper moisture content must be maintained. If too little water is used, the silage will rot. If too much is used, the anaerobic bacteria will sour the silage.

Mr. Cook informed us that Mr. Bromfield, who was in the field, was expecting us, but at the moment was loading hay for silage. Mr. Bromfield has a very unique method of haying. A side rake is attached to a double mower. Hay wilts for forty-five to sixty minutes and a baler without string presses the hay and loads it on the wagon to be hauled to the silo. Mr. Cook asked us to tour the barns and buildings while he notified Mr. Bromfield of our arrival.

Mr. Scott of Scotty's Supper Club near Mansfield was called and promised to arrange for cabins and dinner reservations.

In the basement of the barn we saw twenty-two holstein and guernsey cows. They were in a loafing parlor or pen type barn where mangers were filled with well-cured hay. The loafing parlor is supplied with about three feet of straw every day and with a good foot of sawdust once a week to absorb liquids. This allows the cows to be clean and comfortable at all times. The manure and urine promote bacterial action and rot the straw and sawdust. This compost, loaded with countless bacteria and plant food, can be loaded with a manure loader. It is then spread on grass fields at the operator's convenience in a time and place when it will return the most profit. The manure is plowed in "roughly" and the whole field fitted with heavy disk and cultimulcher. This mixes it into the soil rather than burying by "clean" plowing. Instead of a bare surface, subject to run-off and erosion, the surface is open and loose to admit air and trap and conserve moisture. No strictly "clean" plowing is done at Malabar.

A new loafing parlor is being designed by Mr. Bromfield. It will be on a larger scale. The winter's supply of hay will be stored in front of the cows. Moveable mangers will allow the cows to literally eat their way out. The cows also had access to a ten acre field of eight inch pasture composed of Ladina alfalfa and some brome grass. They also have seven acres of bottom blue grass and white clover. This as an alternate pasture was mowed high every three weeks to kill weeds and provide higher protein pasture. The mowing also lays down a thick mulch of organic material over the blue grass which keeps it cool and fresh and growing all through July, August, and September.

Separated from the loafing parlor by a thirty-foot paved alley was a cleverly arranged milking pen with two batteries of four stanchions each. The room was equipped with Surge Milking Machines approved by Mr. Leach and his cohorts but just as vigorously condemned by an equally noisy opposition.

Mr. Bromfield arrived and led the bus with his trusty Jeep, accompanied by his three Boxer dogs, Prince, Gina, and Folly to the top of a high, steep hill. Tom Hackett's car was able to make the grade but boiled for minutes later to show its disapproval.

One side of the hill was covered with horse sorrel and daisies while the other side of the hill was covered with Alsike Ladina and some young alfalfa. Mr. Bromfield explained that this farm was known as "the thinnest farm between Little Washington and Newville." It had been an abandoned farm on which no one would even bother to cut the hay. Last year two tons of crushed limestone and three hundred pounds of 3-12-12 fertilizer per acre had been added. This fertilizer and two tons of lime will be added each five year period to replace lime and fertilizer

removed by crops and erosion. The field was seeded with eight pounds of alfalfa, five and one-half pounds of southern brome, and one pound of Ladina per acre. The new seeding had been cut high three weeks ago. This cut down weeds and other trash acted as shade on the young growing grass and legumes. It also held moisture.

These barren abandoned hills are ripped up first by a Ferguson tiller and then disked until poverty grass and weeds are killed and a seed bed created. All trash is left in the surface. Lime, fertilizer, and seed are applied in the damp trash seed bed. There is no chance for erosion and germination rate is very high. The fields are clipped twice during the first summer to eliminate weeds during that period of time. By these methods at a cost of about $18 per acre, they are able to convert land producing twenty-five cents per acre or less in one year to $60 to $70 per acre production of silage hay and pasture.

The lime sweetens the soil, promotes bacterial action, and allows unavailable plant food that was trapped by acidity to become available for plant use. The roots reach down and return leached down plant food to the plant. The soil is a pebbly Wooster silt loam from which most of the silt has eroded.

Mr. Bromfield quoted Professor Bray of Illinois as stating that bacteria, water, and roots wear down these pebbles, release their inexhaustible minerals and plant food if proper soil practices are followed.

Wheat that produced seven bushels per acre seven years ago produced thirty-five bushels per acre five years ago after two years of this treatment. After four years of grass, last year it produced fifty-three bushels of wheat per acre.

As an example we went to a gravel bank which had no vegetation except a few scattered weeds until last year. The part that had been fertilized had a three foot stand of alfalfa that would yield two tons to the acre.

As we returned to the first steep hill, we realized that the two pastures on either side of the road were not trick displays. They were just the result of proper land use applied by someone that has the welfare of the future generations in mind as well as present values. One side of the road could not properly feed one steer on eight acres while two steers could be well fed on each acre of the other pasture.

Across the valley to the south lay a farm that had been acquired five years ago. It also had been an abandoned farm. It has produced wheat that yielded sixty-seven bushels per acre. A fifty foot contour of corn fringed the wheat field. The corn was separated from the creek by a fifty foot strip of sod. Saturday morning we stood on that soil, a recent heavy rain had cut tiny gullies in the corn, but carried the sand less than five feet into the grass strip.

On another hillside to the east of us lay a hay field that had been farmed for two years. It was similar to the first, only the Ladina had spread and formed a thick mat of rich growth. The Ladina is similar to white dutch clover, only it runs on the ground and roots on each node. Volunteer Alsike had filled in the heavy forage which was so thick that the cutting bar often

plugged and had to be raised to get through. The southern brome had begun to show in places. Within the next five or six years the brome and volunteer Kentucky blue grass will prevail. The sod will be broken up for grain and again returned to grass.

On our way to the bus we were shown a spring that filled a four-inch tile. Seven years ago this spring was a mere trickle, it now supplies a cold storage room, two bass and blue gill ponds and joins the river through a cleaned out ditch. The ditch was previously so high that it caused four acres of waste land near the spring. A hole was dug eight feet deep, four rods wide and eight rods long. Now all of the four acres drain into the pond and are productive soil. The three-fourths mile of ditch was cleaned out by placing $200 worth of dynamite sticks twenty-four inches apart at the proper depth. The middle stick was exploded, which in turn exploded all the others and cleaned the ditch to the proper depth. It exposed an abandoned farm bridge that had been covered with four feet of silt. This showed the extent to which erosion had played its part during the one hundred and thirty years man has cultivated and tilled soil on that farm.

We left Malabar, Mr. Bromfield, and his three Boxers and located Scotty's Cabins on U.S. 42 near Mansfield. Here we had our huge steaks at 8:00 p.m. Most of the waitresses had left, but John Breyfogle took the orders, helped set the tables, and acted as a time saving waiter. A review of the day and plans for Saturday were made. Paul and Bernard Ederers' trumpet snores soon fell on deaf ears.

Saturday morning we were awakened by the two Ernest Schaeffs, had a cup of delicious coffee served by Scott in person and completed our breakfast in Mansfield. We arrived at Malabar at 8:00 a.m. and were met by Mr. Bromfield, Prince, and his boxer harem.

We inspected the deep freeze unit and fire fighting unit that will throw water from the nearby pond to any building on the farm at the rate of 500 gallons per minute. This will also be used for irrigation at a later date.

We next inspected the corn cribs which are vermin proof. The floor has a grating spaced one inch apart. Shelled grain falls on a cement floor underneath and can be removed for use. This allows air to circulate up from the bottom as well as the sides. Additional ventilation is produced by hollow wire cylinders four feet long and one foot in diameter. These are placed end to end forming an air vent lengthwise of the crib. The corn comes direct from the picker and is fairly damp when stored but dries well in these cribs. Cornstalks are shredded and smashed down in the field which is covered by Balboa rye that was planted in August. This affords excellent pasture and protects the soil from erosion. The cattle tramp the stalks and their complete decomposition results.

We revisited the dairy barn and saw loosely baled hay that had weighed fifty-five pounds three weeks ago, but the moisture had evaporated and reduced the bale to thirty-three pounds, due to the particularly loose method of bale picking. We opened a bale and found the center to have a green color and in perfect condition. The cows had come back to the loafing parlor from early pasture. The guernseys are being replaced by young holsteins brought in from the Wisconsin cheese areas at six months of age. They are bred to an Aberdeen Angus bull and the calves will

later be choice two-year old beef with many Angus qualities. Production records are kept on all cows. Only the best are retained for the herd nucleus, others are sold on the Eastern Market.

Mr. Bromfield also prefers holsteins as only the best cows get any grain. Holsteins can consume larger quantities of rich silage, hay, and pasture so they will produce more milk at less cost.

The cows are milked by the stop watch. Each cow is allowed only three minutes. Twenty-two cows are milked in fifty minutes. When a battery of four cows are milked, they are released. The milkers take the other battery of four and a special gate opens and allows four more to enter the proper battery. Each one knows her time and place just as does a baseball player at bat. The milking parlor is kept spotlessly clean by flushing all refuse down a four-inch drain to a cistern immediately after milking. This is later applied to the pasture, after cows have been pastured for three weeks and removed. Additional sanitation is practiced by dipping teat cups in sodium hypochlorite solution and hot water. This adds to sanitation, stimulates milk flow, and thus decreases milking time.

The two herdsmen constantly study bovine medicine application to various diseases and ills of cattle and applied practices of sulpha drug.

Mr. Bromfield agrees with Mr. Doane of Doane Agricultural Research in the vertical system of farming. He believes that farmers should attempt fewer projects and do them much better. The day of "farming as grandpa did' is past. It has only been supported for years by poor government management. The money spent on subsidy and P.W.A., W.P.A., A.A.A. Relief, and other price balancing regulations should have been used for education and supervised practice to help farmers promote a paying farm program. There has never been a surplus of farm produce. Draft rejections and educational surveys show the toll that malnutrition has taken on American manhood.

Farmers produce large quantities of food, often at a loss. They sell at wholesale and that food reappears to the consumer with its food value removed and at a prohibitive price. Fifty gallons of grade A milk can be converted to one hundred pounds of cheese worth $1.08 a pound, two pounds of butter can be churned from the whey and the whey residue makes excellent hog feed. The milk, worth $42, can be sold for $119 as dairy products, thus three and one half times the original profit can be realized and the food elements are returned to the farm. This plan will soon be used on Malabar farm. Cheese will be ripened in caverns and held for shipment in the large walk-in refrigerator.

On Malabar, grass is the main issue. Dairy and beef convert grass to gold. Swine, poultry, and all other issues are only useful where they can utilize the by-products of grass. A two hundred and fifty tree orchard is being bulldozed because it does not fit into the grass picture. A large modern poultry plant is being scrapped because hens do not produce on grass. Either of these could make money but specialists would be needed to man them, and they do not fit into the main grass theme. Even the growing of corn will be abandoned in the future. Corn depletes the soil of plant food and allows erosion to remove humus from hillsides. Corn can be more profitably purchased from expert corn growing specialists than to be grown on grass specializing Malabar.

The United States is the only country where a farmer is a "jack of all trades." Mr. Bromfield believes that the future successful farmer will have to specialize. He buys his dairy heifers from a specialist. He feeds forty people a day and buys his potatoes from potato growers. His cooperators or farm partners are grass specialists. These are highly paid men like Mr. Cook who can contribute to better farm development. These men receive $110 a month salary and two per cent of the annual gross income of the farm. This is well over $50,000 this year, and $100,000 gross is not far off. Last year their salaries ranged from $3,700 to $6,000 a year. They also receive all the meat, milk, maple syrup, eggs, fruit, fish, garden produce, electricity, gas heat, and housing they are able to use. This makes up eighty-five per cent of their necessary expenses. These food commodities are delivered to the home daily upon order of the housewife. The engineer employed on Malabar Farm left and [sic] $80 per week job in Toledo. He is now earning in excess of that amount. The day of cheap or dumb labor is past. This has been proven too often by past farm accounts. They have left and shown the visous [sic] circle, "Poor farmers make poor land. Poor land makes poorer farmers."

After making a detailed study of the farm that has been under operation for seven years, we noted an alfalfa field that has been under proper land use for two years. While inspecting this pasture, Prince, the lead boxer, streaked across the field followed by the fawn and brindle females. They soon returned with a large woodchuck. Mr. Bromfield explained that woodchucks were becoming so abundant that the boxers were doing their part to hold the chick numbers in line. Prince carried his trophy for several miles before depositing it on a steep side hill. Two large buzzards circled the remains and we suspect that the heavy stock of wild life, birds and fishes encouraged on Malabar was helped to maintain a proper balance. Foxes, pheasants and other wild life will use the den vacated as a shelter. They also use the many hedge rows made up of Rose Multiflora and other bramble that have beautiful flowers in summer and produce large quantities of berries for quail, pheasants, and other hungry winter birds.
The two year alfalfa seeding was a supposed flat area with only a five per cent grade. Here sheet erosion has taken its toll. We noticed many spotted and dwarfed plants. The book, "Hunger Signs in Crops," revealed that it was a boron-potash deficiency. This troubled Mr. Bromfield for the first few years, but the third year the soil always corrected itself. This was caused by the roots reaching down in the leached soil and bringing up the necessary boron and potash. The next field showed exactly those results. Three year old alfalfa showed no deficiency.

We next crossed to the Ferguson Farm through a woods trail. We recrossed the farm creek by climbing a large over-hanging rock. This creek formerly had a silt bottom. Only scavenger fish could breed in it. Now the bullheads and carp are gone and in their places, according to the Ohio Wildlife Commission, are sixteen times as many bass and other game fish. Related to water pollution, the Ohio Wildlife and Fish Commission, of which Mr. Bromfield is an active member, believe a surprising statement to be true. They have found, concerning decrease of game fish due to pollution, that of the three usual sources of pollution, chemicals from industry, garbage, and refuse from cities, and silt from farming land, the latter source throughout the nation is by far the most destructive.

They point out that game fish need sand or gravel bottoms in which to nest. Where silt from farms is on the bottom of the lake or stream, no young fish can be produced. This statement is affirmed by the U.S. Department of Wildlife.

We next passed one of the many caverns on the farm. It had a sheet of water dripping down like the eaves of a house during a heavy rain. This cavern will eventually be utilized to age cheese.

The wooded area had a dense undergrowth which contained basswood which is nearly extinct in Ohio. This is due to pastured wood lots and the demand for basswood. Mr. Bromfield pointed out the fact that the lush undergrowth was due to the woods not being used for pasture. Trees are a crop on Malabar and have their place in the central grass theme. They are harvested when mature. The young trees trap water. Water flows from the wooded hills where trees are pastured. The water runs off, removing humus and plant food. No young trees grow and the old trees mature while small.

From the wooded areas we passed to some extremely steep hillsides. These were receiving the same treatment for pasture lands with similar results. Seventy-eight head of heifers due to freshen all within the next ninety days ranged these hills. They were sleek, fat, and in ideal condition to start on their new role of heavy production. Mr. Bromfield believes that heifers do better if allowed to range on semi-wild pasture than on lush pasture all of one variety. He suspects that there are weeds, leaves, and other herbs that growing heifers as well as cows need.

The herd was photographed by Knud Frandsen from Denmark, now studying American agriculture at the Fernden farm; and Clarence Rossmen, our moving picture photographers. The herd stampeded but was restored by Clarence Egerer and Dan Hassen. Five reels of mostly color film as well as many rolls of snaps were taken. These snaps will be collected and each of us can order the desired prints. Barney Meyers took a large collection of stills. Copies of these will all be purchased by the Arthur Hill F.F.A. to form a nucleus for a visual educational collection. In parting we were pleased to hear Mr. Bromfield say that we had traveled farther than any other farmers' class to his farm. He congratulated the class for their keen interest in his program and their desire for knowledge as shown by their questions and group attention. We were invited to return at a later date.

We left Malabar at 2:00 p.m. with the satisfied feeling that Mr. Bromfield's advance statements were true and that we had met one of America's great men.

We had luncheon again in Mansfield. The principle topic on our return trip was how to hold our existing soil fertility and increase it. More humus will save many miles of tile in the Saginaw area, we hope. There is a wealth of plant food left under our farms if we will give legumes a chance to reclaim it. Some farmers, living on pebbly soil can look at a stone with a different light. It may some day take the shape of Manna. Three farmers stated that they expect to earn at least $1,000 extra in the next few years as a result of information received on the trip. These very fine thoughts and discussions were rudely interrupted by Elmer Hopkins tenor and Willis Leach's bass. The song ended and the bass kept rolling. Willis was snoring. Albert Bates was dreaming about his cow that he had failed for the first time in seven years. In Ann Arbor five co-

eds stood on the corner. No buzzer, no wolf howls. Newell Warsin, Ken Fierke, and all of the F.F.A. were asleep.

Bus trips were planned for 1948 to Traverse City, but none can ever overshadow the hospitality and educational value from Malabar, Mr. Bromfield, and his three Boxers. (Lytle, c. 1947).

Appendix C: Letters From Louis Bromfield About Establishing an Ecological Center

Dear Chester and Ed and Paul;

Hunter is here at Malabar and we have just been going over the outline of the proposed union with the Conservation Foundation and the Soils Conservation Districts organization. I am in complete agreement with the plan for a number of reasons. My only objection is that it does not go far enough and that its goals are too limited. At the risk of repeating myself I will recapitulate some of the ideas I have set forth in the past regarding the progress and present situation of the FOL and of other similar organizations as well.

It seems to me that the battle for soil conservation to which all of us have given so much energy, time and money, has been won, and we are left with no issue. Soil conservation will be continued and developed from here on out for two reasons (I) because farmers and landowners have become educated (2) and more important—that the working of the laws of economics will force such practices as indeed they are already doing.

As you remember I began several years ago to make two important points and I think developments have proven me right. (I) that we must broaden our scope and activities against the day when soil and water conservation would no longer be an issue. (2) that we should be bringing up some younger leaders to take the place of us veterans who were certain to grow older and be diverted by increasing amounts of responsibilities of all kinds. Both situations have arisen and the solution has been found for neither.

I am not overlooking the expansion into the field of nutrition to which I have given my enthusiastic support and in which Jon and Ollie have done a magnificent job. I only think again that this is not broad enough…not so broad as the issue of soil and water conservation which effects everybody and which, given a chance, interests everybody. The difficulty is that if we stick to the emphasis on physical nutrition alone, we limit our goals and unfortunately we acquire an incredible following of cranks. We all know what that means—that the nutrition conferences which are remarkable and on a high level, attract great numbers of faddists and that after anyone of us speaks, we are immediately mobbed by an army of cranks.

To clarify the point, I have a feeling that if we broadened our nutrition base, sacrificing something perhaps on the scientific side but gaining on the popular side, we would immediately feel the response in interest and support, especially from the general public. In other words if we set up some such goal as: How do we maintain and increase the high protein diet of the American people at a lower cost while at the same time bringing to the farmer greater profits and prosperity? How do we feed our growing population without the shortages which already face us and which can gradually but steadily reduce the quality of the diet while the cost to the consumer increases? How do we lay the foundations of a world program which will end by feeding everyone adequately and putting an end to the Communist stomach?

In other words, with such a program we should have a cause with as wide an appeal and as broad a base as the conservation of soil, water, forests and man when the conservation program was originally new and needed desperately the support of all of us. Nobody but cranks any longer doubt the virtues and material profits of soil conservation or reforestation or flood prevention. These goals are achieved and it remains only to put what we know into practice in a universal sense, which is being done.

But I would go beyond even the broadened nutrition program with its emphasis on economics and sociology as well as upon physiology and health. What we need as an

organization, or with other organizations, and what the world needs and what people would snatch at is an ecological goal, or in other words, the amalgamation and clarifying of Man's Relation to His Environment. This would include soil conservation, flood control, agriculture, forestry, recreation, nutrition, health, population, fishing and hunting…in other words the establishment of an organization which, for the first time in history, formulated a program and an ideal under which Man, whether on his own farm, in his county, his state, his nation or in the world could live on this planet to the greatest possible development and satisfaction. Certainly nothing could make greater advances toward peace and liberty and satisfaction.

This sounds like a tall order but I do not think, on examination, that it is anywhere near as tall as it seems. Eventually it will have to be done and eventually it will be done. The world is merely waiting for it.

And now we come to the second stage of how to do it, and that brings us back to the ideas which have been churning about off and on in my mind for the past several years. I have spoken of these ideas in confidence to some of you from time to time, but they have grown enormously in what seems to me a practical sense.

To begin with, as we all know, one of the difficulties we have had financially in the past has been that we were dealing with ideas and ideals and that, from the farmer on up, it is difficult to sell people on something they cannot see or touch. As Ed remembers on the trip through Texas with all the big-shot executives, they were sold once for all and completely on soil conservation because they saw. Of course, as the soil conservation battle has been gradually won it has been increasingly difficult to rouse interest, get new members and new contributions. To be honest, I have been giving less and less time to crusading not only because of getting older and because of increasing responsibilities, but because I began to feel and the feeling increased that I was wasting my own time and energy in talking more and more only to people who already believed what I believe or to a waning audience of faddists. I could not help feeling that actually I was getting much larger and more practical results by working with the farmers who came here and with farmers' organizations. I think probably that all of us have had the same feeling, either consciously or unconsciously. With a new program, properly planned and set up, such I suggested above, I think I might go back into the battle with the vim of an old fire horse hearing a fire bell. And I think that would largely be true with thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people.

Now to the third stage…that we have a concrete, physical center from which all of this might operate…a foundation, a center which would tie it all together. A Foundation for Ecology, to study, plan and carry out progress toward the ideal state of Man's relation to his environment. It could begin modestly but it could well grow gradually into an institution, a pattern of the most prodigious interest and influence, not only in this country but throughout the world.

This idea, as I suggested to you in the past, did not come to me spontaneously. It was forced upon me by our experience at Malabar and in the adjoining Muskingum Conservancy District. I began to see the tremendous attraction of something which could be seen, something which could be touched…an influence which gradually I became convinced was more powerful than any amount of societies if one judged it in terms of getting the job done and getting results. One farmer would come and a couple of weeks later come back with five or six neighbors. One busload would come from a county and a few weeks later two or three busloads would turn up from the same county. Farmers came back year after year, some of them as often as seven or eight years running.

Now to move into a larger field, the same thing has happened to the Muskingum Conservancy. Once it became known, the crowds come from everywhere and send back others. Both Bryce and myself are bombarded with correspondence and demands to speak, and the District itself has been forced to set up a service of guides and cars to take care of people. We have both made countless speeches to commissions and groups explaining the whole of the plan and its results. We have visitors not only from all parts of this country but from all over the world. And it grows all the time, like a snowball. The trip I am taking to Brazil is a result of an invitation from a group of big industrialists and landowners, providing even a special train, after two of their members had been in this area and seen the farm and the Conservancy District. The rest of the South American trip including four other countries is the outcome of the same hunger. The pressing invitations come year after year from groups in South Africa, India, New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere.

I mention all of this only because I have seen it happen and grow until it is like having a bear by the tail. There seems to be no end to it. How much greater could be a concrete center on Ecology and its influence.

I see it as a center which accumulated and co-ordinated all information in the field of man's relation to his environment whether it was on nutrition, flood control or what you will. I see it as being established in an area which was in itself a laboratory. A center which evolved research projects which could be carried out in the laboratories of the Battelle and Rockefeller Institutes or in the colleges and universities, a center which maintained contact with all progress in all fields whether it be economics, nutrition, wild life, recreation, flood control or what you will.

Physically, I see it as starting modestly with a central building which could be visited by people from all parts of the world seeking information on any given subject, where they could obtain information on what projects to see whether they be civic developments, farms or flood control projects, which kept in touch with all existing organizations, their purposes and proposals. It should be equipped perhaps with a small theater in which films could be shown. From this point we could go as far as we liked. From such a concrete base, we would have little difficulty, I think, in finding support from all sorts of industrial firms.

Where then should such a center be? Obviously it should be in an area, preferably near the center of population and highly available by railroad, plane and highway. It should also be in an area which, as I pointed out above, is a laboratory in itself, an area which is highly populated, part agricultural, part industrial, with all the problems of recreation, distribution etc. which arise in such a typical area.

Now the northern Ohio area seems to fulfill all of these requirements. I do not suggest this through any personal interest (I already have more troubles than I can cope with) or because I am an Ohioan but because to a higher degree than any other portion of the country, the laboratory conditions exist in the widest sense. There is both hill and flat land in which the Agricultural Revolution in all its aspects is rapidly being worked out. The Muskingum Conservancy district with its wide program of soil conservation, forestry, flood control, wild life and recreation is in full and successful operation. At Coshocton, in the heart of this area, is the largest hydrological station in the world. Also the Ohio Experiment Station at Wooster lies in the heart of the area and on its border is the Battelle Institute, largest of the world's research foundations and already cooperating fully with FOL in the field of soil and nutrition. In other words any citizen from Sunday driver to scientist could find in the area remarkable patterns of

development and degeneration side by side, as well as what is probably the most advanced ecological pattern in existence anywhere.

At the head of such an institution should be a director with a large point of view and understanding who could pull the pattern together and develop and manage the growth in the importance and influence which would be inevitable. Of course in all the world, Paul is probably the ideal man.

I am going to take enough more of your time to explain an example of the kind of thing I mean which illustrates also the points I have long made that terraces, contour plowing and strip cropping and much of the soil conservation program are essentially emergency measures and would be wholly unnecessary in a sound and really modern agricultural program. All these emergency measures have made it difficult to sell soil conservation because of their expense and inconvenience in terms of pasturing, fencing etc.

This is the story. About five years ago an idea burst on myself and Bob Huge…the idea of raising corn in a new way with higher yields and much less cost. You are all familiar with ladino clover and the vast contribution it has made to American farming. Well, we found ourselves at time with fields which became solid, weedless, mats of ladino and we said, "Why not grow corn in ladino clover without any plowing or fitting whatever?" At the time we had neither the machinery nor the time to undertake the experiment. We had meanwhile ceased raising corn altogether and were growing only grass, legumes and small grain in a program which made all terracing, strip cropping and contour plowing unnecessary.

We turned the idea over to Dr. Roger Bray at Illinois and in three years he raised on plots an average of 135 bushels per acre. As you know not three per cent of corn farmers in the U.S. get as much as 100 bushels per acre. Ladino clover, of course, will grow virtually anywhere under almost any conditions but makes a prodigiously thick mat with a little lime, moisture, and fertilizer.

Let's examine what all this means. (I) That under this system all soil erosion and water loss is eliminated. (2) With machinery now being developed at International Harvester and elsewhere, the narrow strips in which the corn is planted can be fitted (by rotary knives) seeded and fertilized all in a single operation. One only comes back to harvest the corn. (3) Rainfall stays where it falls instead of leaving knolls dry and flooding out the corn in the low spots in rolling country. (4) Provided reasonable amounts of potash and phosphorous are returned to the soil, it is possible to grow corn on that same field indefinitely with no erosion loss and only a constant gain in organic material and nitrogen. (5) Even a hill country farmer can be a corn and hog farmer if he chooses (6) About September first a hog farmer could turn two hundred hogs upward into a ten acre field with a box of minerals and forget them. They can hog down the corn into a mat of the highest protein producing legume there is.

The significance of something like this is almost limitless and certainly revolutionary in most parts of the world. A farmer who today need [sic] twenty to twenty five cents for his hogs to make a reasonable profit could make money on ten or twelve cent hogs. Shortages, either of corn or pork, would be almost inconceivable. The row-crop erosion problem would vanish, and with it much flood water and all siltation damage from run-off. The soil would only gain steadily in nitrogen and organic material instead of being rapidly depleted by plow and cultivator. The plot experiments actually show a bigger yield than under the old-fashioned methods. The same technique could be applied also to cotton growing. The cost of raising corn would be reduced by at least 85 per cent which would permit heavy fertilization. This year we are putting out a considerable acreage on a commercial basis.

I only point this out as an example of what the world really needs in a practical sense. It needs it far more than it needs distribution of elaborate American machinery to countries where fields are too small and there is no one who knows how to handle or repair machinery.

All of this has been a bit long-winded, I am afraid, but I have tried to be as comprehensive as possible. I just feel that if we set ourselves a big enough goal and a practical goal, the rest will take care of itself. Such a program and plan would, I think in time, attract large sums of money from industry and foundations. I do not think it is a dream in any sense but a highly practical plan which represents what is one of the greatest needs in the world today. I do not think it can be done by government or even by a university. With Paul's leadership and direction, I feel that it could expand almost indefinitely even to the point of securing government subsidization in branches in many countries.

I would suggest that all this be treated as confidential. Let's not permit certain parties again to steal our ideas and exploit them to our disadvantage.

Best of everything

as always

in haste (Bromfield, c. 1952a).

Dear Jon;

Thanks for the long and comprehensive letter with most of which I am in complete agreement. I think our purposes are the same but that we see the thing a little differently. Like yourself I am inclined by instinct and temperament to be a lone wolf and to be completely bored by details and organizations and directors' meetings and in the case of the particular project I suggested in the vaguest sort of outline, I would want nothing to do with it, besides helping out where it was possible. I don't think, however, that if it were properly set up it would be swallowed up by any ecologists' group and under Paul's direction it certainly would not be. Primarily it would be an exhibit and a source of co-ordinated information. One of the great strengths of the FOL in the past was the fact that it provided information and still does on a very broad base and told people where to go and what to do. We have endless research foundations, colleges, divisions of the D and A etc. etc. etc. But there is little or no cooperation and certainly little or none dealing with the whole of the picture of man's relationship to his physical environment. The very endless duplication of research efforts which goes on in every field from nutrition to wild life is evidence of this lack.

Maybe I see things on too big a scale but certainly I do not see them in a visionary way. Someday this country and the world will be forced to wake up and undertake some ecologic pattern which employs all the interlocking factors. When it does so, there will be an immense conservation of effort, money, energy and what you will and infinitely greater progress will be made. The greatest obstacle to such a far-reaching overall institute is the same that we run into in any such plan. The same we ran into in the attempt to obtain coordination of the overall conservation effort in Ohio—that individual presidents and executive secretaries and directors of divisions are all afraid of losing something of their authority and prestige. The same thing with the politicians and government. It's just too damned bad for the world.

Such a proposal as you suggest could never be set up and made to function without the prestige and the financial backing of something like the Rockefeller or Ford Foundations and should not be attempted on any other basis. Personally the whole thing is a matter of indifference to me save that it represents the kind of thing which can bring about practical and

solid advances toward world peace and feeding the world and by bettering the whole state of mankind. It can only be done by better agriculture, better animal and seed breeding, better flood prevention methods, better soils, etc. etc. I frankly do not feel that FOL has the financial backing at present or has ever had it to accomplish anything so comprehensive. What the FOL accomplished was never done by government backing or by money, God knows, but by the individual effort and prestige of all of us. I don't see any younger men coming on to take our place and without younger men we are headed exactly nowhere.

I have no objection whatever to such a center being set up as a Friends of the Land project, but I do not think we are big enough nor do any of us have any longer the time or the energy to push it ahead on our own. I have a continued and perpetual interest in all the fields we have discussed, but I don't think that anyone of us or indeed most of the old war-horses still remaining can cope with a project of the size I suggest. It needs the prominent backing and prestige of a big foundation.

Such a project will come about some day and when it does it will be of much greater value than all the monkey business of the World Agricultural Organization, the U. N., etc.

I wish we could get together before I go away to discuss all this but I am swamped with work and trying to get away by the beginning of next week. Expect to be home by the end of March. In the meanwhile, best of everything as always. Louis. (Bromfield, c. 1952b).

Appendix D: "What about Malabar?" by Paul B. Sears

A few weeks ago a young New Zealander blew into Mansfield, Ohio, searching for a guide to take him to visit Malabar Farm. This, he explained, was to be for him the high spot of his American tour. He, like thousands of others, had read about it in the books of its late owner, Louis Bromfield. Malabar is probably the best-known farm in the world. Its influence in calling attention to the need for wise husbandry at a time of terrific and growing pressure upon the landscape makes it an incalculably valuable asset, whether or not one agrees with all that Bromfield so engagingly wrote and said about it.

I became acquainted with the Bromfields soon after their return from France, watched the search for a farm and the subsequent development of Malabar. Since my own farm is less than an hour's drive distant, I can speak advisedly when I say that Louis was a good farmer as well as a persuasive advocate of good farming practice. I saw the worn-out slopes rejuvenated, the springs reopened, the grass become lush, and thrifty herds develop. Woodland that had been beaten by grazing once more sprang into life, and the whole scene became one of beauty and vitality.

I witnessed the Bromfields' baronial hospitality to house guests from everywhere—far beyond the financial capacity of any Ohio farm, however enriched by its savory produce. This magnificence drew heavily upon his personal fortune. More than that, the throngs of visitors who came for a few hours were given unstinted time and attention in excursions over the farm. One Sunday when Dr. Warren Weaver and I were week-end guests, a radio announcer had, without consulting Louis, broadcast an invitation to Ohio farmers to join him at Malabar. Some 600 came, and while I suspect that the announcer got a private dressing down, none of the 600 had reason to guess that he was not warmly welcome. The crowd got the full treatment of demonstration and explanation from the laird himself. Wandering about, watching faces and listening to comments, I knew that no one's time was being wasted.

These schools with their one-man faculty had their lighter aspects. A group of elegant ladies in high heels once came to see farming, and farming they saw. Their host took them for a trial run (with benevolent malice) first into a rich dewy pasture, freshly and liberally spotted with what Ohio farm boys used to call "cow-pies." The pace was fast and the resulting pattern of lifted skirts and hop-skip-jump reminded one irresistibly of the legend that attributes the origin of the Highland fling to the ordure-littered streets of ancient Glasgae. But the gals (God bless 'em) passed the test and the tour settled down to the usual interesting and enlightening routine. No one knew better than Louis what a potent force public-spirited urban women of means have been in encouraging better land-use and respect for natural resources.

I was amused, too, by the report that among the farmers who came to see, the first to try out some of the Malabar practices were those sufficiently far from the farm not to be caught doing it. Change of practice among farmers is a serious matter, exposing the innovator to ridicule unless he operates stealthily. But with increasing confidence, change began to shift inward toward Malabar itself as more and more operators saw the point.

There can be no doubt that Louis Bromfield inaugurated many beneficial practices, that he and his family gave unstintedly of their time and privacy to demonstrate these practices, and that Malabar has profoundly influenced, as well as interested farm operators and owners and the general public too. This essentially private enterprise, in a day when too many of us look to government for guidance and favors, sets a pattern that ought not lightly be discontinued.

A Real Need

Farming at its best, as world events show us, is essentially a matter of private enterprise. The farmer lives with his business in a very real sense. The best safeguard of the land through the generations is an affection for it that outweighs its function as a mere thing of utility and immediate profit. Granted that agriculture is and should be a primary concern of government, the United States seriously needs centers for demonstration and even experiment that do not have the inevitable limitations that follow when such activities are tax-supported and must depend upon legislative appropriations.

More than one professional scientist in government service has said to me privately, "There are risks we dare not attempt—unconventional but important experiments that ought to be set up and kept going. We not only have to face appropriation committees, but our scientific colleagues who, in their way, are often pretty conservative. We don't like the risk of being caught out on a limb and looking foolish." These same individuals were free to grant that some agency should have the freedom they do not possess. Any such agencies must, of necessity, be financed by private gift.

There is for example, the widespread and growing cult of organic farming. I call it a cult, because it is based upon intuition rather than exhaustive controlled experiment. Its central idea is that land use practices ought to approximate those natural processes which, by perennial return of organic material to the soil, develop and enrich it. Louis Bromfield, in his grass-farming operations, caught the central idea. But he was no blind apostle. He knew that unless the soil, the manure and other products of it, contained the essential minerals to start with, no amount of humus from it could create these nutrients de novo.

Now that the importance of humus is being more widely appreciated, both by scientists and farmers, there still are many dark recesses of the problem to be explored. How to build up organic content while maintaining a reasonable farm income is one. Another is the still too mysterious realm of biotics and antibiotics in the soil. Is it really true, as so often asserted, that plants grown in highly organic soils are not only more immune to fungus and insect attack, but actually more nutritious for man and beast? We do not know, and we ought to know, one way or the other.

Whether or not Malabar can be used eventually as an experimental center for problems of this kind, its usefulness as a means for emphasizing the need for their investigation, is beyond question. The immediate challenge is to preserve it as a place for demonstration, using to the full its credential as one of the best-known farms in the world.

Louis died intestate, leaving only his farm. He had spent his energy and much of his fortune in later years in evangelism for better land use and the importance of wise husbandry. Necessity required that the farm be sold, but his friends have hoped that it might continue as a growing influence in American life. The Cobeys of Galion, Ohio, have generously kept it going with a skeleton staff, while an organization known as Friends of the Land has secured loans for its purchase, giving a mortgage in return. The house and contents remain intact, a continuing source of interest to the many pilgrims who come to see it and the farm. The loan has been underwritten in part by a group of Mansfield friends, in part by the Noble Foundation of Oklahoma. Some gifts have been received towards retirement of the mortgage by Ollie Fink of Hidden Acres Farm, Zanesville, Ohio, who is the devoted executive officer of Friends of the Land.

More gifts are needed, however, not only to cancel the present debt, but to enable Malabar to function as it can in the public interest. Here is an opportunity, not only for the many

individuals who feel a growing concern for the land, but for that great segment of American business and industry which depends upon rural prosperity, to express a tangible interest and promote a novel, effective project for the common good.

What Can be Done

What are the plans of those interested in this objective? For the present, primarily educational, I should say.

First the farm must be kept going, as a solvent and model operation in its own right for the sake of its good example. This involves not only sound technical control, but adequate fiscal controls of the farm as a farm. Steps are now being taken to insure both of these matters. Louis was better at writing books than keeping them, but we must remember that it is unfair to expect everything of a man simply because he is talented. Farmers like Cosmos Blubaugh, who started on a shoestring and put into practice the essentials of the Malabar idea, are firm in their belief that such methods are not only within the reach of the average farmer, but to his ultimate best interest.

I am not disturbed, so far as the financial soundness of the Malabar plans is concerned, by the fact that Louis' travels and efforts depleted his means, while the friends who enjoyed his abounding hospitality ate him out of house and home. But it is necessary that from now on, the financial character of operations be made a part of the educational record, and this will be done.

Facilities for visiting groups of several kinds are needed. Cabins, or perhaps a rustic lodge to accommodate some thirty to fifty people for periods of two days to a fortnight will serve small conferences, lay and professional. We know already that science teachers from colleges and high schools would welcome facilities for classes that could study nature and husbandry out-of-doors. There is sore need over the country for such opportunities.

Then there are the callers who come for a few hours, and keep coming. For them there must be adequate and competent guide service. There must be proper caretakers for the house and especially the library. This last item, rich in valuable works dealing with the land, ought to be catalogued and made available to workers. If it is, there is every prospect that it will be added to by gifts, and be much used.

Beyond these first essentials, the future will have to show how Malabar can be of increasing use to the public. But this for the present is a sound start, and should ensure that an important cultural resource is not wasted. And it will not be, if the wide circle, not only of friends, but of all those who love the land, will match the enthusiasm and confidence of the small handful now attempting to preserve Malabar.

Despite the critical character of our present international problems, I suspect that the future health of America is most tightly bound to what happens inside of our own boundaries. And among these contingencies, the relation between man and land will be crucial. No merely technical solution will serve, for problems of behavior and value are deeply involved. These are the kinds of problems to whose solution the creative artist is essential.

Louis Bromfield was such an artist—both in handling the land and in writing about it. That he was neither a scientist nor a business man is immaterial—those are talents that can be found elsewhere. Nor should the fact that on occasion he sanded both scientist and business man with the rough side of his tongue be held against him. He respected the best in both as he did in men generally.

Having served with him on a commission for eight years, I was continually impressed with the frank directness he could summon—between naps and magazine reading—to cut

through non-essentials and speak good common sense. Even granting that some whose hide he has flicked have called him a "screwball," it is well to remember that more than one head of a great laboratory has indicated that he wishes he could get more screwballs in his outfit. A prime need of mankind is for ideas. Once given, and particularly if they are embodied as tangibly as they are at Malabar, they ought not lightly be tossed aside. (Sears, c. 1957).

Appendix E: Letter from Dr. Jonathan Forman to Ollie Fink

[Note: The blank spaces were in the original typewritten document and were included in this copy because they seem to represent missing words]

January 15, 1959

Dear Ollie:

I am writing to try and straighten you out before, in confusion, you do something more and destroy all the work you have put into Friends of the Land through the last 18 years and all your good work for the Malabar project.

Let's look at where we are and where we came from: We bought Malabar for $2500 and mortgaged the future of FOL to four groups of men and women, some of whom had known you or me, or FOL or in my opinion the ideals that motivated Louis B. and to whose background you and the rest of the FOL made significant contributions. All persons in these groups were admirers of Mr. B. and his farm. Miss Duke has perhaps a better idea than the others. But all were business people and who knew that before anything else the farm must get on a business basis. The Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm trusteeship of Mansfield, Ohio members, reading of the great names composing our Committee of 100, the employment of high grade scientists to live at Malabar Farm, and going on our conducted tours were impressed with our prosperity and, of course, found us delinquent in our indebtedness to them and were ready to foreclose on their mortgage. You and I, as members of the executive committee of FOL, on the other hand, had collected more than $47,000 from friends of the Malabar project. $11,500 went to recover the woods. We spent the rest on paint, repairs and other things, including, if I am correctly informed, some $2000 on lawn cutting. Result, the income from 13 months of Malabar Farm, $1790 from wheat and some $700-900 a month of income from . Then there were certain fed animals sold. All we to for $65,000 to $70,000.

Something had to be done and Ralph took the best way out. He was generous enough to buy out the Mansfield group and get them off his and our neck just as they were determined to foreclose. Please, do not forget that in the meantime, the reputation of FOL as a business organization in the area grew worse and worse. So that if it had not been for Ralph the whole amount of the loan would soon have and where would our plan have been then?

Now let's go back and look carefully at what Ralph has meant to us. By doing so, we may well be able to evaluate his motives and not jump at conclusions with a with disappointment. Ralph was originally brought into the Malabar project early in the game by his brother, Herbert who knew and loved Louis. But Ralph came in because Malabar might be used for testing Cobey implements. This got no place when Clyde Williams went over the possibility of raising funds or otherwise build an Agricultural Research Division of Battelle Memorial Institute.

At this point, I ask you to look at Ralph's background. He was raised very close to his father who was a great, good and generous man who taught Ralph his civic responsibilities—to give generously to his church, to the boy scouts, to the Community Chest and to the Conference of

Christians and Jews. He had got in this Malabar project until he thought he saw a chance to make the contribution that he will ever be able to make. So he put his soul into this, while his business and his personal life, with its problems of one major legal battle after another. He has done a good job in the operation of the farm. Our mistakes as I have seen in the "Big House"—our real problem has been trying to swing $150,000 without funds. To make Malabar Farm go we needed

$6000 per year for 4% on $150,000
2300 per year for Real Estate and Property taxes
2500 for repairs
500 per year of Mortgage (30 years)
$16800

Now if you will divide the sum by the number of usable acres in the farm

Pasture	335.00
Crops	250.00
Conser-	120.00
vancy	705

We find we must make it necessary to get $22.80 net profit off every acre—and remember that the $16.80 estimate is very close.

Now, we were through when Ralph and Solomon went to Oklahoma for relief and to insure that we could go on with the project. Now, picture Ralph's predicament. He was in no position to bargain for he had nothing but trouble to trade. He comes before men who hold a delinquent mortgage—an $85,000 mortgage in default! He is glad to agree to their terms which were only those that good business men formed for the protection of their funds. Just remember, these men are only interested in saving Malabar and that they had worked with Louis on a similar project in Oklahoma. They know what we are up against—and left Ralph no alternative but to agree.

1. That a Foundation under Ohio laws be set up to take over Malabar assets, titles, and liabilities.

2. When this is done they will pick up from Ralph the $56,000 share of the mortgage on Malabar minus the $15,000 Ralph had put in himself. They said they wanted a man to head up the Foundation who himself had a real interest in the profit. They could not see turning the operation over to people who had little or no money invested. So Ralph had no choice but to continue on as a farm manager if we were to be saved

3. The names of the friends or their whereabouts was to be a secret for they did not want to be bothered by fund raising organizations and individuals seeking someone to underwrite their causes

4. Why you were being held responsible for our poor showing at the farm in 1958 as Executive Secretary, I do not know. It may be because of what you have said in conversations with Forbes or Sam, or a letter you wrote, I do not know. (I do know that your confidential letter to

Cecil was not very well received). At any rate, the next consideration was that the Trustees of the Foundation be limited to 3 men and that you were not to be one of them.

Solomon had hoped to be one. While he had put no money into the project, he was closer to Mr. B. than any of us. His interest was great. He had given a great deal of himself and his time. But somehow they seemed to feel that in addition to Ralph there ought to be a businessman with more funds. It was natural that they lean to the head of the Mansfield Trustee group—William Locke, a man held in high esteem by the people of this region and as an insurance man—and capable of keeping the buildings in repair and properly covered with insurance. So Bill Locke was named the second trustee.

Why I was chose I have no idea. Maybe because I represented, as you do, some 18 years of association with Mr. B. and FOL. At any rate that was the set up with some talk that when the show gets on the road, the board might be increased to 5 persons.

Now, about getting funds to operate with for in this regard we are no better off than we ever were. We need to make at least $15,000 of repairs. (I sent the Executive Committee of FOL a memo on this sometime ago). We need a rotating fund of approximately $10,000 for farm operations (checking account). We need funds for the "Big House", Chapman salary and our educational activities. Our efforts with the Committee of 100 never got off the ground.

The Foundation needs an elected President and a Secretary-Treasurer. The members of the Foundation, at their first meeting elected Herb. Cobey to be President and charge him with the job of fund raising. Herbert had recently came back in with some ideas about what ought to be done in the way of PR and also good sound ideas about what the efforts we had made to keep Malabar Farm on the nation's map. It was, in my opinion, a good move. It should be clear to both you and Solomon that Herb is not on the Board and, therefore, he did not crowd someone off.

Now, I shall write you in a day or so about Pete Cooley and his relationship to the program as I see it. In the meantime I beg of you not to write any more letters. The Malabar project needs you just as much as it ever did but you are only making your by assuming the policies you have.

You and I are old friends. We know each other's faults. We have worked at this too long to see all of it go down the drain. FOL has a place at Malabar and without it I cannot see how we are to survive.

Cordially,
s/ Dr. Jonathan Forman. (Forman, 1959, January 15)

Appendix F: Report to FOL Board of Directors by Ollie Fink

FRIENDS OF THE LAND
Special report to the Board of Directors by the Secretary to the Board, Ollie E. Fink.

SUBJECT: Background information pertinent to the transfer of Malabar Farm and the creation of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation.

Dear Director:

A situation has developed which, as Secretary to the Board of Directors, I feel demands your attention for the good of Friends of the Land.

First, let me explain that I personally feel that the negotiations in connection with the transfer of the Malabar project to the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation, all handled by the President and his personal attorney "by passing" the National office of Friends of the Land, in my opinion, misrepresented the true conditions to the Directors.

At least by influence, it was implied that the Trustees of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation would be in charge of the program and operations at Malabar. It will come as a surprise to you as a Director that Ralph Cobey as President of FOL arranged that he be the operating head of Malabar Farm. To have accomplished this without the deliberation and action of the Trustees, in my opinion, means that Mr. Cobey violated the trust we as directors had placed in him by conferring the office of President upon him, and that he used the opportunity to advance his personal prestige and power.

To justify this opinion let me cite the following: When Mr. Bromfield lived, he gave the Ferguson Tractor company a "million dollars" worth of free publicity in READER'S DIGEST and other publications. On one occasion Fowler McCormick, Chairman of the Board of the great International Harvester Company, personally asked me if I would help them get their equipment in use at Malabar Farm. There is no farm in America where there is the publicity advantage that is found at Malabar.

When we first decided to try to buy Malabar, sometime after the death of Mr. Bromfield, Mr. Belknap, the attorney in the New York firm that settled the Bromfield estate, told me that Ralph Cobey and his brother were among the best prospects for the purchase of Malabar. Herbert Cobey told me soon afterward that Ralph might buy it. Soon Ralph mentioned to me that he thought a considerable revenue might be available from farm machinery manufacturers such as Cobey and others to use Malabar Farm as a testing ground for research in agricultural equipment. At this time we were consulting with the Battelle Memorial Institute in regard to their possible interest in Malabar as a research center.

Immediately after the death of Mr. Bromfield, Ralph Cobey and his brother arranged with the Executors to manage the farm during the period of settlement of the estate. After Friends of the Land purchased Malabar, Ralph was made Chairman of the Farm Committee and continued the

management for Friends of the Land. Ralph had helped raise the funds in the Mansfield area and loaned $15,000 of his own money in the purchase funds.

Ralph moved more farm machinery manufactured by his Cobey firm to Malabar, and removed a great deal of that which Louis Bromfield had used. Much was "traded-in" for newer equipment or sold. The fact that Malabar still is of value to Farm Machinery manufacturers is indicated that in recent months (1958) the Case Company and the Oliver Company both placed expensive equipment at Malabar without cost to the Malabar project.

The Cobey Manufacturing Company has, as its dealer contact man, a Mr. Charles Clark, who in addition to this employment with the Cobey organization is a farmer and a bank director. Mr. Clark is Mr. Cobey's personal representative in managing Malabar and has been publicised [sic] in the Mansfield News Journal as the Farm Manager of Malabar Farm. I trust you will recognize that FOL has placed its reputation in jeopardy with other farm machinery manufacturers by agreeing to an arrangement in which Mr. Cobey, as President of the Cobey Perfection Body Corporation, is to be operator of Malabar Farm, and one of his key sales department men is the farm manager. This assures the Cobey Company not only of the use and display of their products, but the opportunity to tell the Cobey story to the thousands of visitors at Malabar. I personally have heard all the members of the Executive Committee, except Mr. Cobey, express lack of confidence in Mr. Clark.

Friends of the Land secured in gifts, largely from our members, more than $50,000, and an additional $4,000 in a fund raising effort. This was spent for Malabar Farm programs and maintenance or transferred to the Foundation account—mainly by Mr. Cobey and his committee. In addition to this there was a Farm income of another $30,000, which they spent. In addition to these accounts, the Executive Secretary and the National office staff contributed three fourths of their efforts for about two years to the saving of Malabar Farm. Much of the Quarterly, LAND & WATER was used to sell the program. These latter two items—salaries of staff and publication of the Quarterly represented another $15,000 to $20,000. All of these items we find totaled more than $100,000, spent to help Malabar and $75,000 of this from non-farm sources.

Mr. Cobey, as mentioned above, loaned $15,000 to help finance the purchase of Malabar for FOL, but he held a mortgage at 4 percent. All of those who loaned funds to purchase Malabar, except FOL and Mr. Cobey, had their funds returned. Those who gave funds of more than $50,000 to help Malabar, were not considered in the negotiations as having any interest in Malabar. For example, Mr. Cobey, as mentioned above, loaned $15,000—protected by a mortgage against the Malabar Farm, but has manipulated the situation so that he has the operations of the farm under his personal management. Had this plan been announced before the Directors approved the sale of Malabar, I would have advised the Directors I did not approve of the plan. (Cobey did not collect interest on his loan.)

As a Director, you are probably wondering about Dr. Forman. I did not consult him about this letter. He was named a Trustee on the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation which, of course, divided his loyalty to the FOL Board. I know that he has been greatly disturbed by the turn of events, and in my opinion fails to look at the facts realistically. He is reluctant to accept the possibility that Mr. Cobey has not acted in good faith.

A further word about Mr. Cobey's good faith! Bill Solomon, a business man in Mt. Vernon, and a new Director has been very close to Mr. Cobey in all of the preliminary negotiations with the Noble Foundation of Ardmore, Oklahoma. Mr. Solomon owns a farm adjacent to Malabar and was one of Bromfield's closest personal friends. Mr. Solomon has made a personal sacrifice to help with the saving of Malabar out of respect for his friendship with Louis Bromfield. He had anticipated being included among the trustees, but Mr. Cobey ruled him out. Mr. Cobey stating to Solomon, "You have no reason to feel hurt, you have no money invested. Solomon explained that he was doing what he had done, including securing the $30,000 gift from Miss Doris Duke, because of his friendship for Mr. Bromfield. To which Cobey is reported to have said, "You must remember that Louis Bromfield is dead."

Mr. Solomon had a part in making Mr. Cobey President of FOL. Representatives of Mr. Cobey's Public Relations department contacted Mr. Solomon stating that Ralph was going to resign from FOL unless more publicity and recognition was given to his services. Mr. Solomon passed this message to Dr. Forman. The position of Chairmanship of the Board of Directors which had been held by Louis Bromfield, had not been filled. Dr. Forman, as President, advised Ralph that he was appointing him to this vacancy. Dr. Forman consulted no one about this step. It was confirmed at the next annual meeting (1957). Dr. Forman's term as President expired at the last Annual Meeting and Mr. Cobey and Dr. Forman were elected to their present positions. Mr. Solomon has expressed the opinion to me that this action on his part to get Mr. Cobey elected was "the greatest mistake I ever made." (February 8, 1959)

I am sorry to have to bring these unpleasant matters to the Directors. However, if FOL is to continue, firm action must be taken to regain control. It is too late to do anything about Malabar except as public resentment may force the Noble Foundation executives, who put up the funds to create the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation, to revise their management plans.

Louis Bromfield, on many occasions, emphasized the fact that the good farmer must be part business man, part scientist and part specialist and he must know more about more things than any man in any other profession. None of the three trustees are agriculturally trained and seldom if ever get their hands in the soil. I personally do not feel that they are well informed about the Bromfield ideals in agriculture. Of course, only Mr. Cobey is responsible for the farm program and one might well question his interest in maintaining the Bromfield ideals which, by the purpose clause of the Foundation, he is obligated to follow. The spotlight of public interest will be focused upon the operations at Malabar. I for one am not optimistic about the future place of leadership of Malabar Farm.

Mr. Cobey recently suggested that meetings which had been scheduled by FOL, monthly, on Saturday evenings at Malabar during the Winter be cancelled. Suggestion was made on the day the people were to come for the evening meeting in January. Dr. Forman had made the schedule. Cobey said, "No one asked my permission to have these meetings." In spite of the fact that I personally have probably given much more in the way of a personal effort to save Malabar, my family and I and some of my friends will not feel welcome at Malabar, in spite of the fact that FOL, according to the announcements, at the time of the forming of the Foundation, were to continue the activities just as we had been doing. (Educational programs, tours, etc.)

When Malabar was purchased the sale included the Pontiac Station Wagon (1956) which Mr. Bromfield had used. Today it is probably worth about $1,500. FOL has a certificate of title to this car. It has been quartered at our FOL office. It has been a great help to our FOL program. The contract which the Board of Directors approved with the Louis Bromfield Farm Foundation provided that we transfer all personal property "on the farm."

They are asking that we, in addition to the great sacrifice FOL has made in the above $75,000 to now turn over the Station Wagon. Of course, I can get along without it, but I am taking this opportunity to show that in my opinion the Executive Committee has been inconsiderate of the needs of FOL and the funds contributed by friends to save Malabar. The Pontiac is not so important, the principles and policies of action are important. Knowing at what a sacrifice we have existed over the years prompts me to place this matter before the Directors.

I have talked with several directors about this situation and they are of the opinion that we are justified in holding the Station Wagon which we own and have paid for and have a valid bill of sale. I personally think the Executive Committee should be governed in this case by the poll which I am taking in this letter. Will you please express your personal opinion and return the attached ballot to me. Thank you.

Ollie E. Fink
Executive Secretary (Fink, 1959)

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